

THOUSAND SPRINGS SCENIC BYWAY CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



PREPARED FOR
THOUSAND SPRINGS SCENIC BYWAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BY
PLANMAKERS AND J-U-B ENGINEERS, INC.

MARCH 2007



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

Mark Twain

◆ Project Overview

South Central Idaho geography is the result of huge prehistoric cataclysmic forces resulting in the breathtaking Snake River Canyon. For 67 miles, the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway provides a glimpse into this remarkable geology, history, and a nostalgic rural lifestyle.

America's byways represent a rich tapestry of diverse landscapes, treasured places, and remarkable local stories. It is the mission of the National Scenic Byways Program to coordinate and encourage grassroots byway projects nationwide. America's byways are all "scenic," representing the depth and breadth of local scenery, arts, culture, history, and geology in America.

The genesis of the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway has its roots in the extensive national and state scenic byways programs. This *Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan* (January 2007) draws upon and updates the original *Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan* written in August 1998.

◆ The National Scenic Byways Program

The National Scenic Byways Program is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. The program is a grassroots collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve, and enhance selected roads throughout the United States. America's Byways® is the umbrella term used for marketing the collection of 126 distinct and diverse roads. America's Byways include the National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads. (See the web site at <http://www.byways.org/learn/>.)

Since 1992, the National Scenic Byways Program has provided funding for almost 1,500 state and nationally designated byway projects in 48 states. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as All-American Roads or National Scenic Byways based on one or more archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities.



◆ The Idaho Scenic Byways Program

Today, Idaho has 27 designated byways with 2,023 miles of highway leading to Idaho's special places. Idaho has had officially recognized scenic routes since 1977. In 1991, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the State of Idaho combined the scenic routes and back-country byways of each agency under one umbrella. The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) was designated by the governor as the lead agency responsible for administering the Idaho Scenic Byways Program to meet the requirements of the Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991. In 1995, the Scenic Byways Advisory Committee was established to coordinate scenic byways nominations and federal grant application requests and to advise the Idaho Transportation Board on all scenic byways activities.

Although no specific state funding is available for scenic byways projects, the National Scenic Byways Program, through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) allows for project funding of qualified state scenic byways and back-country byways that meet certain criteria. These criteria and other important information about Idaho's byways can be found at <http://itd.idaho.gov/planning/reports/scenic/byways.html>. (Source: *Idaho's Scenic Byways Program Guide (May 2001)*, Idaho Transportation Department.)

◆ Thousand Springs Scenic Byway and Interpretive Sites

The 67-mile Thousand Springs Scenic Byway winds through Gooding, Twin Falls, and Jerome counties and passes briefly through Twin Falls, the urban center of South Central Idaho. After many sites along the byway were considered, 11 priority resource sites were selected. See the **Key Site Index** for a list of the sites and **Figure 2-1** for a route map that identifies these sites on the byway. Section 3 provides details about each site.

The byway begins on US-30 just after leaving I-84 at Bliss. Quickly the byway drops into the huge Snake River Canyon, providing a grand entrance and vista to the country ahead. As the byway meanders south, the visitor discovers "melon" boulders, Hagerman horses, the Devil's Washbowl, wind farms, Native American history, country towns, historic places, fish hatcheries, and wildlife habitats.

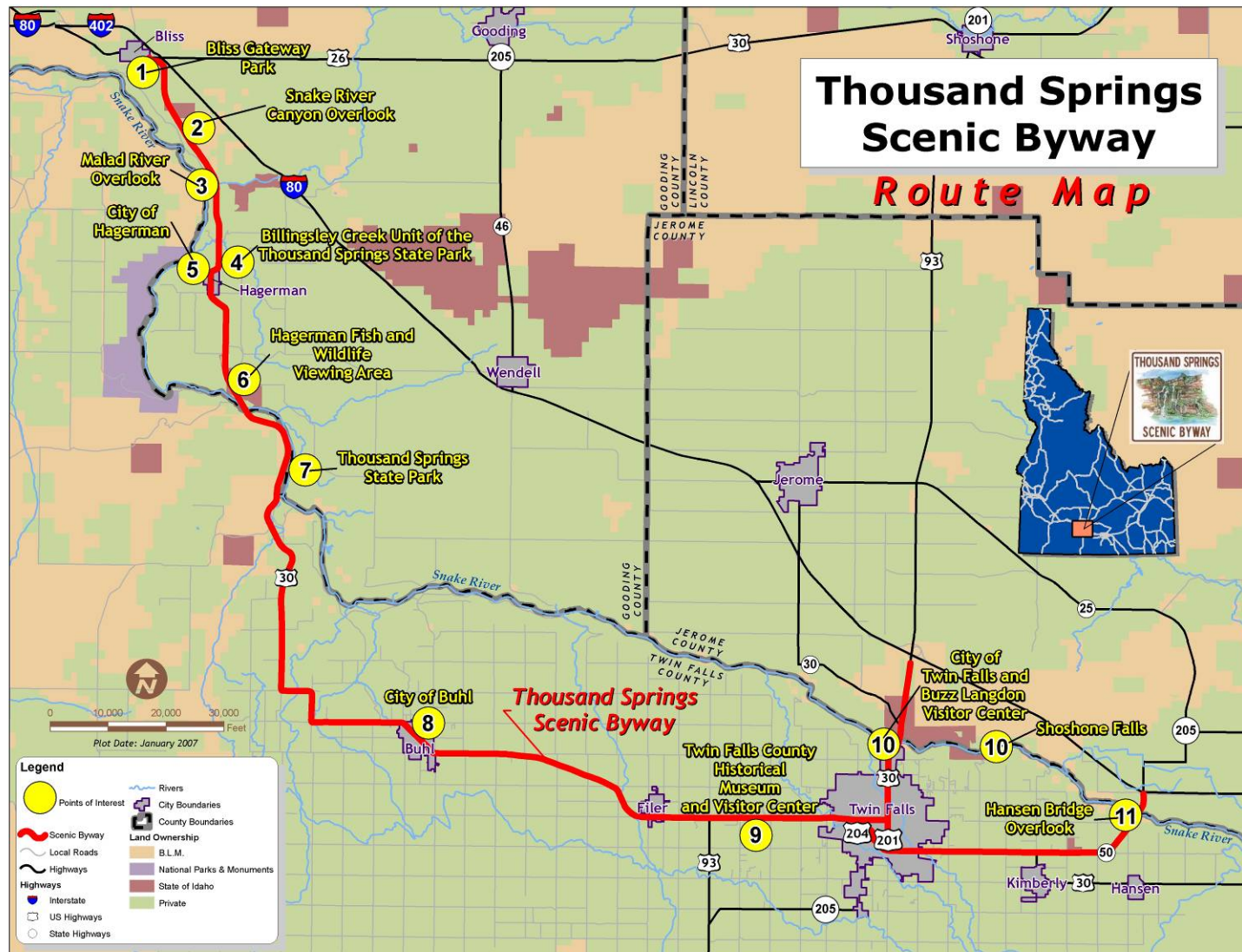
Just south of Hagerman, Thousand Springs is clearly visible from the byway. The vast Snake River Plain Aquifer flows 1,308 miles beneath volcanic rock from the City of St. Anthony to the Snake River before reaching the Thousand Springs cliffs. The aquifer might be as much as 9,000 feet thick, with the bulk of the water in the top 2,000 feet.

Key Site Index

- Site 1 ◆ Bliss Gateway Park
- Site 2 ◆ Snake River Canyon Overlook
- Site 3 ◆ Malad River Overlook
- Site 4 ◆ Billingsley Creek Unit of the Thousand Springs State Park
- Site 5 ◆ City of Hagerman
- Site 6 ◆ Hagerman Fish and Wildlife Viewing Area
- Site 7 ◆ Thousand Springs State Park
- Site 8 ◆ City of Buhl
- Site 9 ◆ Twin Falls County Historical Museum and Visitor Center
- Site 10 ◆ City of Twin Falls and Buzz Langdon Visitor Center
- Site 11 ◆ Hansen Bridge Overlook



Figure 2-1. Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Route Map





As the byway continues southeast across the rural landscape, it is occasionally interrupted by the tree-lined streets of Buhl, Filer, Hansen, Kimberly, and Twin Falls. Originally established in the days of the Carey Act, a government program that brought canal water to the area in the early 1900s, these quiet farming settlements are experiencing a 21st-century rebirth. Water remains a critical resource as the region anticipates new residents and industry.

At Hansen Bridge, the byway crosses the Snake River for a final breathtaking view of the canyon below.

Side trips are abundant. Some of the noteworthy characteristics of the byway setting include the following.

- ▶ **Natural resources**
 - Snake River and Canyon
 - Lava flows
 - Hot springs
 - Snake River Aquifer
 - Waterfalls
- ▶ **Landscapes**
 - Landslides
 - Hydropower
 - Farming
 - Wind farm
- ▶ **Recreation**
 - Fishing
 - Whitewater rafting
 - Kayaking
 - Hunting
 - Swimming
 - Boating
 - Waterskiing
 - Scuba diving

▶ **Rural communities**

Small communities line the byway and others are only a short trip away. These farming communities are a wonderful memory of what many call home. Careful exploration and discovery of each town is a pleasure.

- Bliss
- Hagerman
- Filer
- Buhl
- Hansen
- Twin Falls

▶ **Culture and history**

- Native American history
- Writers and artists
- Agricultural legacy
- Archaeology

▶ **Economies**

- Hydropower
- Wind power
- Fish hatcheries
- Agriculture

◆ **Elements of a Corridor Management Plan (CMP)**

A *corridor management plan* (CMP) is a written document developed by the communities and agencies along a scenic byway that outlines how to protect and improve a byway's qualities. Specific elements of the plan include:

▶ **Visions and goals statement**

"Vision" is a depiction of the byway in the future. "Goals" are the methods that will make the vision a reality.

▶ **Public participation**

For the byway to succeed, local residents, business owners



and officials must understand and support this important designation. Public participation involves public meetings, where citizens and interested parties can voice their opinions. A CMP confirms that public participation has taken place and will continue to take place in the future.

► **Stewardship**

The CMP identifies measures that can protect and enhance the byway's resources. It outlines the responsibilities of the individuals and organizations who will contribute to the long term enhancement, conservation and promotion of the byway.

► **Resources interpretation**

The CMP pinpoints locations for information centers and interpretive markers that will educate visitors about the byway and its resources. Any other opportunities for interpretive displays or materials should be identified.

► **Financial resources**

The CMP discusses how development, stewardship, promotional and interpretive efforts will be funded. The sources of potential funding are identified as well.

► **Highway safety**

The CMP identifies any potential impacts that the byway may have on the safety, operations or maintenance of the road. It recommends any needed improvements, and furnishes a schedule to review safety issues with the appropriate highway and transportation officials.

► **Marketing and promotion**

Marketing and promotion are essential to the success of a byway. The CMP identifies strategies to make potential visitors aware of the byway, its resources, and its location. These strategies may include targeted advertising, signs or the distribution of brochures. Attracting tourism is often one of the reasons that byway designations are sought. Some planning is necessary to make sure that the byway benefits both the community and its visitors.

► **Support and implementation**

To help meet and maintain the visions and goals, a management entity is often established to direct the day-to-day coordination and advocacy of the byway. The CMP identifies the people and organizations that will participate and their specific responsibilities.

**Elements of the
Thousand Springs Corridor Management Plan**

Acknowledgments
(Section 1)

**Project overview, vision and goals, byway route map,
planning process**
(Section 2)

**Management strategies, descriptions of key sites,
recommendations**
(Section 3)

Highway safety and management issues
(Section 4)

Strategies for marketing and promotion
(Section 5)

Strategies for implementing the plan
(Section 6)

Strategies for evaluating the plan
(Section 7)

Bibliography
(Section 8)



◆ Byway Planning Process

The *Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan* (January 2007) is the result of months of collaboration by local, state, and federal representatives.

From the beginning of the project, extensive public participation was important. A diversified group of individuals representing a myriad of local interests and agencies were invited to help develop the corridor management plan (see Acknowledgments). All byway meetings were held at the Buhl Center and open to any interested person or agency.

The Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Advisory Committee has 27 members representing regional agencies and interests (members are listed in Section 1, "Acknowledgments.") The committee has been diligent, generous, and committed throughout the byway planning effort in developing a management plan that respects multiple interests, opportunities, and constraints.



Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Advisory Committee
Discussion along the Snake River

◆ Community Involvement Activities

Byway bus tour	On March 18, 2006, 15 intrepid committee members braved a cool and windy day to tour the byway. Fortunately, the threatening snow subsided and the bus tour proved to be a very rewarding adventure. Nearly every site was visited and evaluated for its contribution to a "scenic" byway. All interested persons were invited to attend.
Open houses	February 12, 2007—Hagerman February 13, 2007—Buhl February 15, 2007—Twin Falls
Newspaper press releases	February 2007



◆ Byway Vision and Goals

Vision Statement

We balance the use and protection of our byway's unique resources to enrich our quality of life.

Mission Statement

Our communities value the byway and work together to share its resources with visitors and each other.

Goals

- ▶ Preserve, enhance, and showcase exceptional geologic, wildlife, scenic, historic, cultural, and recreational resources along the byway, while respecting local residents and lifestyles.
- ▶ Attract local, regional, national, and international visitors to southern Idaho to enjoy rewarding and memorable experiences of the people and places along the byway.
- ▶ Provide visitor services that consider access, safety, and convenience for people of all ages.
- ▶ Maintain the byway's unique cooperative partnership of local, state, private, and federal agencies in implementing byway improvements.



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RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

◆ Overview

The Thousand Springs Scenic Byway possesses an engaging number of scenic, geologic, natural, and historic sites. For this plan, these sites have been separated into two categories:

- ▶ **Landmark Site**
Provides interpretive displays, rest rooms, drinking water, and RV and auto parking.
- ▶ **Point of Interest Site**
Includes interpretive displays and parking.

This plan identifies 11 key sites for improvement or development along the entire Thousand Springs Scenic Byway—all chosen for their scenic, geological, and historical significance. At these sites, visitors will be provided with turnouts and parking designed for their safety and viewing pleasure. Interpretive displays at these sites will help educate



Lemon Falls

the traveling public about the area's intrinsic qualities. At some locations, nature trails are available to further visitor interest. Other byway locations offer stunning views directly from area roadways.

◆ Intrinsic Qualities

The byway's intrinsic qualities encompass archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic features that are considered representative, unique, irreplaceable, or distinctly characteristic of the area. These intrinsic qualities are found in the natural resources that are visible throughout the byway corridor. Although not as visible, rich cultural resources provide the real character for the byway. Viewing the Snake River Canyon is magnificent in itself, but also provides a unique background for interpreting the cultural and historical significance of the Native Americans and the Oregon Trail as well as the paleontological resources at Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument. The melon boulders deposited by the Bonneville Flood are another example of an intrinsic byway quality. Other qualities include numerous recreational, hunting, fishing, and outdoor activities. The byway also offers significant natural scenery in its many cascading springs, geothermal waters, and waterfalls, particularly Shoshone Falls and Niagara Springs. Together, these and the other unique resources define the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway.



◆ Corridor Design Strategies and Recommendations

Strategies for improving and enhancing the byway include the following:

- ▶ **Gateway communities**
Support the cities of Bliss and Hansen in improving their entryways and providing guide and interpretive signage.
- ▶ **Directional signage**
Upgrade guide and byway signs to identify byway sites. Use the existing byway logo to provide continuity and easy recognition.
- ▶ **Visitor information centers**
Offer facilities and staffing for visitor orientation at Thousand Springs State Park, Billingsley Creek (perhaps shared with the Thousand Springs State Park), Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument Visitor Center, Buhl Visitor Center, Twin Falls County Historical Museum, and Buzz Langdon Visitor Center. Explore the possibility of future opportunities with Rock Creek Station (not open year-round and not staffed during the summer).
- ▶ **Key sites**
Provide consistent standards for access, interpretation, and on-site amenities. Make needed improvements to key sites. Identify key sites by numbers on maps.
- ▶ **Interpretive signage**
Educate visitors about the importance of sustaining the sites and maintaining the byway's environment, understanding that each site tells a piece of the byway's story. Design accurate and informative signage and displays to stimulate interest.



Thousand Springs Near the Snake River

- ▶ **Orientation kiosks**
Provide self-service orientation by means of kiosks at key locations such as Bliss Gateway Park and Hansen Bridge Overlook.
- ▶ **Trailhead development**
Develop new trails to a number of the sites. Accessible trails provide recreation and exercise, and offer an opportunity to enrich the visitors' experience.
- ▶ **Scenic overlook**
Locate an overlook orientation site at Thousand Springs to provide a magnificent view of the springs and Snake River Canyon.



◆ Key Sites Recommendations

Key sites for the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway are listed below. See Figure 2-1 for a map of the sites and the following pages for descriptions.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">1 Bliss Gateway Park<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Side trips: River Road Loop, Glens Ferry, Gooding2 Snake River Canyon Overlook3 Malad River Overlook4 Billingsley Creek Unit of the Thousand Springs State Park<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Billingsley Creek▶ Side trips: Malad Gorge Unit, Lower Salmon Falls Dam and picnic and boat launch, Earl Hardy Box Canyon Springs Nature Preserve, Niagara Springs Unit (including Crystal Springs Lake)5 City of Hagerman<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument▶ Hagerman Valley Historical Society Museum▶ Coltharp Park6 Hagerman Fish and Wildlife Viewing Area<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Idaho State Fish Hatchery▶ Hagerman Wildlife Management Area▶ Hagerman National Fish Hatchery▶ Idaho Transportation Department Hagerman Rest Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none">7 Thousand Springs State Park<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Side trip: River Road8 City of Buhl<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Buhl Visitor Center▶ Rusty Engine Museum▶ Eighth Street Center▶ Side trips: historic barns, Balanced Rock Park9 Twin Falls County Historical Museum and Visitor Center<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Side trips: Filer, Rock Creek Park, Cedar Draw Creek County Park10 City of Twin Falls and Buzz Langdon Visitor Center<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ College of Southern Idaho Herrett Center for Arts and Science▶ Perrine Bridge and Buzz Langdon Visitor Center▶ Shoshone Falls and Dierkes Lake▶ Side trips: Idaho Farm & Ranch Museum, Jerome, Shoshone11 Hansen Bridge Overlook<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Side trips: Hansen, Kimberly, Rock Creek Station, South Hills, Magic Mountain |
|--|---|



Site 1—Bliss Gateway Park

► Location

US Highway 30 (US-30) and River Road (Milepost 172.1), Bliss

► Classification

Point of Interest Site

► Existing Site Conditions



Bliss Gateway Park and Interpretive Sign

On the highway, a Bliss welcome sign and Bliss Gateway Park serve as the gateway to the byway. The grassy park provides shade trees, an interpretive sign, and picnic tables. Bliss offers a number of visitor services with two motels, restaurants, retail businesses, and the Bliss Community Park.

The Thousand Springs Scenic Byway adventure begins at exit 137 of I-84 and leaves I-84 at the west end of Bliss. US-30 and US-26 bring the traveler through native sagebrush and crops to the small city of Bliss. On the south side of the

The Hagerman Valley attracted creative people, including Drich and Di Bowler, who moved to Bliss in 1946, where they built a home and the Snake River Pottery studio. While teaching high school, they continued their pottery business, which became well-known and worth visiting. Another internationally known artist, Archie Teater, painted landscapes during the time he and his wife were at their Bliss studio.



Snake River Pottery Studio

► Side Trips

River Road Loop, a 7-mile side trip, allows the traveler to descend into the Snake River Canyon on the old highway and enjoy the views and scenery. River Road reconnects to US-30 at Site 2 (Malad River Overlook). As the highway enters the canyon, a winding grade ahead reveals the evolution of four different eras of travel. Today, hazardous landslide conditions and the narrow road limit travel to passenger vehicles and the route is not recommended for large motor homes.

Glenns Ferry was platted in 1871 just downstream from the ferry on the Snake River that started in 1863 to handle freight traffic from Kelton to Boise. The city, reached by taking Exit 120 from I-84 and traveling just 0.5 mile, is home to the annual Three-Island Crossing celebration that commemorates this important crossing for emigrants on the Oregon Trail.

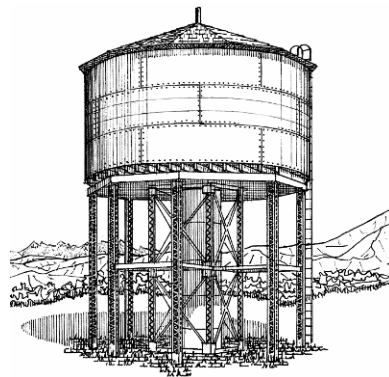


Gooding was incorporated in 1908 and serves as the seat of Gooding County. It is the site of the State School for the Deaf and Blind, which opened in 1910 and now boasts 14 campus buildings. A Basque cultural center opened in 2003, and the city hosts an annual Basque Association Picnic in July.

► *Interpretive Value*

Bliss was named for the David Bliss family, who arrived in 1879 and settled under the Big Hill. The city was platted into lots in 1882, which were revised in 1910. Before 1883, stages and freight wagons moved through Bliss along the Kelton Road. Early nearby stations included the Clover Creek Station and Malad Stage Station. Remnants of Kelton Road are visible near the site of the Malad Stage Station.

Bliss became a railroad town and flourished between 1883 and 1920. A water tower was constructed to feed the thirsty trains after the climb from King Hill. It was replaced in 1913 by a black tower that still exists. Bliss served as a gathering and distribution center for the railroad, becoming more important after the Bliss-to-Rupert railroad extension was constructed in 1910.



Bliss Water Tower
(Source: Liz Mowrey)

Construction of the Northside Canal Company brought irrigation into the area. By 1920, Bliss was a thriving town based on railroading, ranching, and farming activities. Ranches were hit hard in the 1920s and wool prices collapsed in 1921. Range fires in the 1920s and the Depression further decimated the community.

Starting in 1914, the old highway went north of the Bliss Grade to the railroad tracks and then west, parallel to the tracks and

by the water tower. In 1924 and 1925, the Old Oregon Trail Highway between Bliss and Hagerman was regraded and graveled. In 1930, the road through Bliss was paved for the first time. The Work Progress Administration (WPA) widened and graveled the Bliss-Hill City Road in 1934.

US-30 was moved to the top of the hill in 1939, leaving old Bliss in isolation along the railroad tracks. One of the oldest remaining buildings in Bliss is the livery barn. In addition to sheltering horses, the barn served the Chautauqua traveling shows in the 1920s.

The town of Bliss incorporated on May 2, 1947. For a period from the late 1940s until 1953, gambling was legal in Idaho and Bliss. A number of businesses were built along the highway, including the Y Inn, which stayed open 24-hours a day and developed one of the largest rod-and-gun clubs in the area. Instead of servicing trains, Bliss then served automobiles. Dave Bliss started a tradition by providing campground facilities for travelers along the Oregon Trail, which continued with the opening of the Amber Inn in 1978. Evidence of the trail is visible on the northern outskirts of Bliss, just south of the railroad tracks. The highway route through Bliss changed again in 1957 when a new grade to Hagerman was constructed and fewer vehicles traveled the old highway. Another major transportation change occurred when I-84 bypassed Bliss in 1975.

► *Site Recommendations*

- Implement the Bliss Gateway Park Concept Plan, which includes provisions for improving the park to include an interpretive kiosk, picnic tables, drinking water, landscaping, bicycle rack, and vehicle parking. (See **Figure 3-1.**) The remaining portion of the old Y highway would include a Snake River overlook graced with a stone wall. The naturally landscaped site would include six bicycle camping sites, pathway, and an RV dump.



- Provide interpretive information about Bliss, the River Road Loop, Snake River Pottery and associated artists, the wind farm, melon boulders of the valley, and mid-Snake River hydro-power.
- Revitalize downtown Bliss. This is a key strategy for improving and expanding commercial services to support the byway. The city's small-town character and gateway to the byway make it a strong attraction for visitors.
- Prepare a self-guided walking and auto tour to link the historic sites in Bliss to the byway, such as Bliss Community Park, the steel water tower, and the livery barn. Local historic sites would be identified by local signage and a self-guided tour map prepared by the city of Bliss.
- Enhance the side trip to Glens Ferry.

► *Site Improvements*

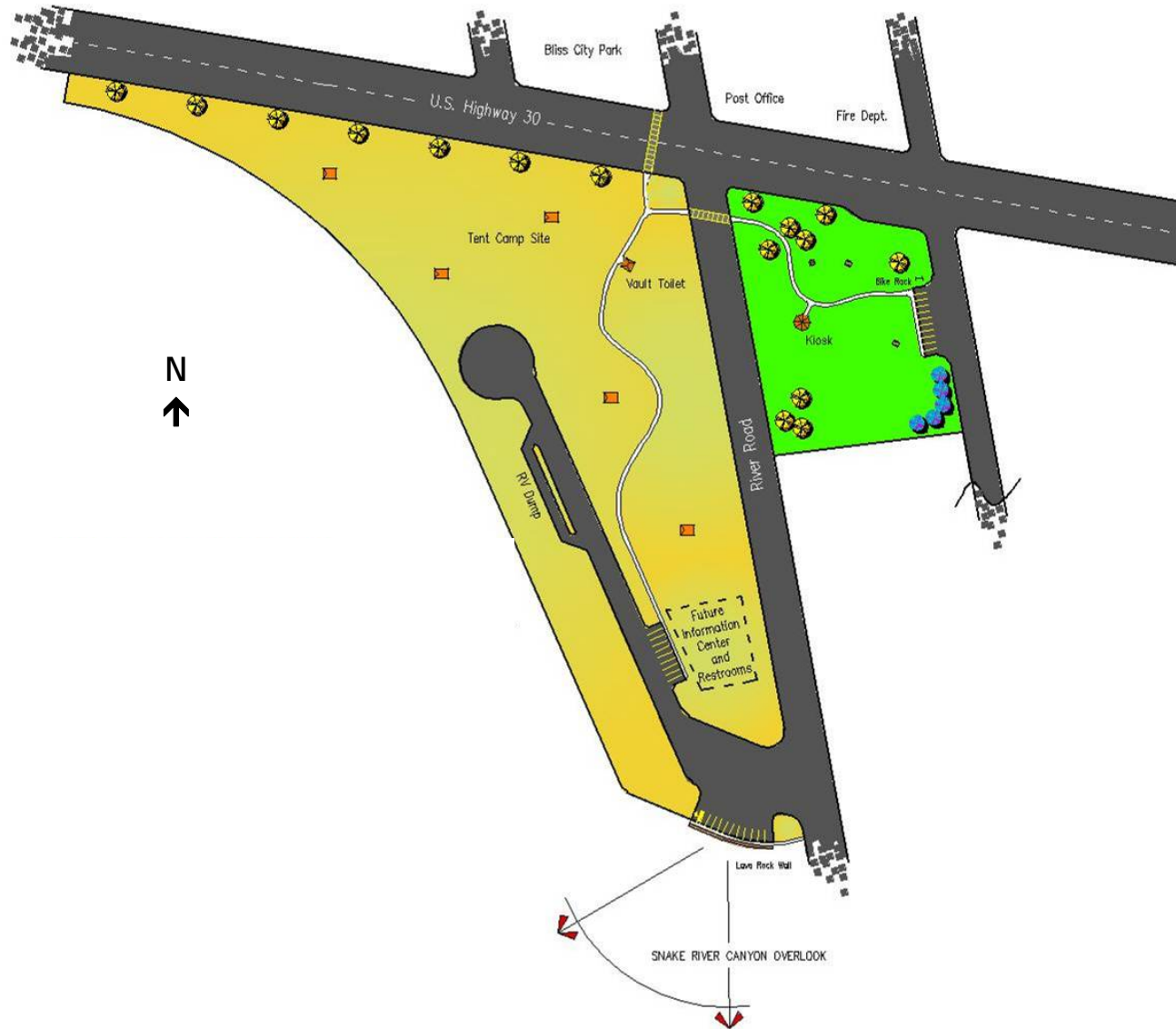
Improvement	Estimated Cost
Bliss Gateway Park	\$100,000
Interpretive signage	\$5,000
Downtown Bliss revitalization	\$15,000
Self-guided walking and auto tour brochure	\$1,000

► *Management*

City of Bliss
Adopt-a-Byway-Site Program



Figure 3-1. Bliss Gateway Park Concept Plan





Site 2—Snake River Canyon Overlook

► Location

US-30 at Milepost 175.7

► Classification

Point of Interest Site

► Existing Site Conditions

The Snake River Canyon Overlook is an ITD-paved pullout that features a panoramic view of the canyon. It is an excellent point to provide interpretive information about the byway and its sites. For eastbound travelers, this is an introduction to the Hagerman Valley. Interpretive signage could provide information about landslides, the wind farm, melon boulders of the valley, mid-Snake River hydro-power, and upcoming sites and side-trips as travelers continue eastward.



Snake River Canyon Overlook

► Interpretive Value

Traveling into the Snake River Canyon provides a close-up view of the black basalt of the Snake River Plain. The geology of the Snake River Plain consists almost entirely of rhyolite, which erupted from a long line of extinct volcanoes that came into existence in southwest Idaho about 13 million years ago. The volcanoes are progressively younger as the line travels northeast along a nearly straight line that ends in the Yellowstone volcano, which is still active.

Approximately 15,000 years ago Lake Bonneville suddenly discharged an immense volume of water. The floodwaters followed the path of the present Snake River. This enormous flood helped shape the canyon and deposited rounded cobbles and boulders known as melons.

The fossilized plants and animals in Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument, across the river, are unique remnants of an ancient aquatic ecosystem. Remains of zebra-like horses, ground sloths, large saber tooth cats, shrews, mastodons, and camels are found in the fossil beds, as well as large beaver and muskrats, and many fish and shell life. Emigrants encountered Indians at Salmon Falls and traded with them for fish, and the site became a popular campground.



Hagerman Historic Marker 300
at Milepost 175.7



Joel Palmer, Oregon Trail emigrant, August 20, 1845:

"We traveled about nine miles, reaching the Salmon Falls. Here are eighteen to twenty Indian huts. Salmon came up to these falls: the Indians have an abundance of them which they very readily dispose of for hooks powder, balls, clothing calico and knives."

► Site Recommendations

- Enhance the existing parking/pullout area, to include landscaping and roadway acceleration/deceleration lanes if required.
- Expand the interpretive signage at the Snake River Canyon Overlook and relocate the byway mapboard.

► Site Improvements

Improvement	Estimated Cost
Enhancements to existing parking/pullout area	\$50,000
Interpretive signage and mapboard relocation	\$6,000

► Management

Idaho Transportation Department
Adopt-a-Byway-Site Program



Site 3—Malad River Overlook

► *Location*

North end of Malad Bridge and intersection of US-30 (Milepost 177.3) and River Road

► *Classification*

Point of Interest Site

► *Existing Site Conditions*

The small, inviting rest area features lawn, trees, picnic tables, interpretive signs, and parking. Panoramic views are offered of Malad Canyon and Malad River. The site is owned and maintained by the Idaho Power Company. The site is 1.5 miles from Snake River Pottery along River Road. The Idaho Power Company plans to make recreation improvements to Lower Malad Park and the Snake/Malad Rivers Whitewater Access, located on the east side of the Malad River bridge. This stretch of the Snake River, known as the Hagerman, is a popular whitewater reach. The whitewater access site will include enlarging the vehicle/trailer parking area, providing better traffic flow, constructing a vault toilet, and enhancing the non-motorized boat ramp.

The Idaho Power Company has developed recreation management plans for a number of the areas for hydroelectric projects that consider land-based and water-based recreational opportunities. Six Idaho Power Company hydroelectric power plants and small parks are now located within the valley.

► *Interpretive Value*

The Malad River was named Riviere aux Malades (River of Sickness) by Donald Mackenzie in 1819 because his men got sick from eating beaver, possibly because the beaver had eaten poisonous hemlock roots. Malad Gorge presents rugged chasms, none more picturesque.

To cross the river, a wooden Malad River bridge was completed in 1892 and replaced by a steel bridge in 1917. The Beaver River Power Company constructed an electrical power generating plant on the river in 1911. Upper and Lower Malad power plants were built in 1948.

Near the head of the gorge, at the base of a waterfall is a churning cauldron known as the Devil's Washbowl, which is located in the Malad Gorge area of the Thousand Springs State Park. The "headwaters" of the Malad River is the confluence of the Big and Little Wood Rivers.



Stone Malad River Power Plant



► *Site Recommendations*

- Support Idaho Power Company's plans to upgrade the Malad River overlook with interpretive panels, picnic tables, landscaping, and parking improvements.
- Support expansion of the trail system to the Malad Gorge area of the Thousand Springs State Park complex) by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation and the Idaho Power Company.
- Support development of a trail plan from Colthorp Park in Hagerman to the Billingsley Creek Unit of the Thousand Springs State Park.
- Support Idaho Power Company's plans to renovate and reuse the stone Malad River power plant.

► *Site Improvements*

Improvement	Estimated Cost
Malad River overlook upgrades	NA (Idaho Power Co.)
Trail system expansion	Volunteer
Malad River power plant renovation	NA (Idaho Power Co.)

► *Management*

Idaho Power Company
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
Adopt-a-Byway-Site Program



Site 4—Billingsley Creek Unit of the Thousand Springs State Park

► *Location*

Access to the Billingsley Creek Unit of the Thousand Springs State Park is at Milepost 179.9 on US-30, which is about 1/2 mile north of the Hagerman city limits.

► *Classification*

Landmark Site

► *Existing Site Conditions*

Billingsley Creek was a working farm until 2001. This 459-acre Unit of the Thousand Springs State Park retains its agricultural roots with a farmers market and an indoor equestrian center. The park offers good wildlife viewing opportunities along Billingsley Creek. There is a mile-long flatwater floating opportunity through the park along the creek for float tubes, canoes, and kayaks. At the upper end of the park are the Vardis Fisher Pond, a beautiful spring-fed pool, and the Vardis Fisher homesite.

► *Side Trips*

The Thousand Springs State Park is composed of five separate units. The Billingsley Creek Unit is the only unit accessed directly from US-30. Side-trips to the other four units are suggested at the appropriate stop along the byway.

The **Malad Gorge Unit** of the park may be accessed from I-84 via the Tuttle exit (exit 147) or by traveling east on the Justice Grade (the 2525 S. Road) at US-30 Milepost 179.4, which is about 1/2 mile north of the entrance to the Billingsley Creek Unit.

The Malad Gorge is one of Idaho's scenic wonders. The 652-acre Malad Gorge Unit of the Thousand Springs State Park offers a self-guided tour of natural wonders. One breathtaking feature of the Malad Gorge Unit is a 175-foot-high footbridge that spans the gorge and overlooks a waterfall pouring into the Devil's Washbowl. The Northrim-Alcove trail and the Woody's Cove overlook trails connect to the main road through the unit. Malad Canyon provides abundant food and shelter for wildlife.



Footbridge Spanning the Malad Gorge

The Idaho Power Company maintains a number of recreation sites in the area. The Idaho Power Company facility closest to Billingsley Creek is the **Lower Salmon Falls Dam and picnic and boat launch**, which is accessed by turning west on the 2525 S. Road opposite the Justice Grade. This road is located off US-30 about 1/2 mile north of the entrance to the Billingsley Creek Unit.



The side-trips described below can be included at the Billingsley Creek Unit site. However, following development of a shared visitor center and stops at the rest area and Thousand Springs, it might be more appropriate to discuss them at the stops closest to the roads accessing these attractions.

Another park unit is the 350-acre **Earl Hardy Box Canyon Springs Nature Preserve**. Box Canyon contains the eleventh largest spring in the United States. It bubbles out of the ground and flows through a steep, rugged basalt canyon before emptying into the Snake River. This park unit remains a mostly natural area. Access is via the Hagerman-Wendell Road at US-30, Milepost 183. Travel east for about 2 miles to 1500 E., then south for 4.5 miles on this road to the unit's parking lot. On the way, you will pass the 3200 S. Road, which accesses the Thousand Springs Preserve and Idaho Power Company's Thousand Springs Picnic grounds.

The **Niagara Springs Unit** of the park is wedged between the Snake River and the canyon rim. Springs emerge and tumble down the canyon's steep basalt walls. The waters from Niagara Springs burst from the Snake River canyon wall at 250 cubic feet per second. **Niagara Springs** has been designated a National Natural Landmark. The unit is a splendid spot for picnicking and wildlife watching. The park offers year-round fishing in **Crystal Springs Lake**, including handicapped-accessible fishing facilities. The park features restrooms, picnic table, and a group picnic shelter. A day-use fee is imposed and camping is allowed.

► *Interpretive Value*

The Billingsley Creek Unit of the Thousand Springs State Park offers excellent wildlife viewing, especially for waterfowl. The basalt canyon walls exhibit geological activity, the deep soils and farming history of the site provide opportunities to discuss soils formation and agricultural practices, and spring-fed

Billingsley Creek offers significant opportunity for water quality and native fisheries education.

For a period, an office of the Grazing Service (predecessor of the Bureau of Land Management), was located at a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp on Billingsley Creek. The CCC was a Depression-era workforce designed by President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal to revitalize the nation's forests and employ thousands of men who were out of work. The CCC built roads, trails, and fences, and developed water holes. With the outbreak of World War II, the CCC was disbanded in 1942 after 9 years of existence.

The former homesite of Vardis Fisher, Idaho's most famous native author, is located in the upper portion of the Billingsley Creek Unit. Fisher's most well-known work, *The Mountain Man*, was made into the movie *Jeremiah Johnson*, starring Robert Redford. Fisher spent his last years working and writing here. He wrote 36 books and was credited with creating a new regional fiction. In 1935, Fisher became the director of the Idaho Writers' Project and Historical Records Project for the federal government's WPA. As such, he was responsible for the publication of *Idaho, A Guide and Pictures* (1937), *The Idaho Encyclopedia* (1938), and *Idaho Lore* (1939). The guide became a model for the WPA's other state guides.

► *Site Recommendations*

- Support the Thousand Springs State Park Plan for the Billingsley Creek Unit, which includes provisions for restrooms, paved parking, expanded picnic area, a group campground, farmers and crafts market, amphitheater, and a local shared visitor center.
- Protect the area's natural resources and byway attractions in the Hagerman Valley through coordinated management by state, federal, and local agencies.
- Honor author Vardis Fisher with interpretive signage and writer workshops.



► *Site Improvements*

Improvement	Estimated Cost
Implementation of the Thousand Springs State Park Plan for the Billingsley Creek Unit	\$2,489,000
Protection of natural resources and attractions	\$60,000
Fisher interpretive signage and workshops	\$5,000

► *Management*

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Idaho Transportation Department
University of Idaho
U.S. Department of Agriculture Fisheries Research
Adopt-a-Byway-Site Program



Site 5—City of Hagerman

► Location

City of Hagerman Milepost 180.5

► Classification

Landmark Site

► Existing Site Conditions

The attractive downtown features historic buildings, retail businesses, restaurants, lodging, RV sites, and services. Hagerman celebrates Fossil Days on Memorial Day weekend. Key attractions include the following.

The **Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument Visitor Center**, located on State Street, offers information and fossil displays. A small gift shop and restrooms are also available. The center is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily in summer. Educational programs are periodically available. The monument, established in 1988, commemorates the world's richest known fossil deposits, which date from the late Pliocene geological time period. The diverse Hagerman fossil specimens represent the last vestiges of species that existed before the Ice Age and the earliest appearances of modern flora and fauna. The deposits are contained in continuous, uninterrupted geologic strata exposing 500,000 years of an intact paleo-ecosystem, including wetland, riparian, and grassland savanna habitats.

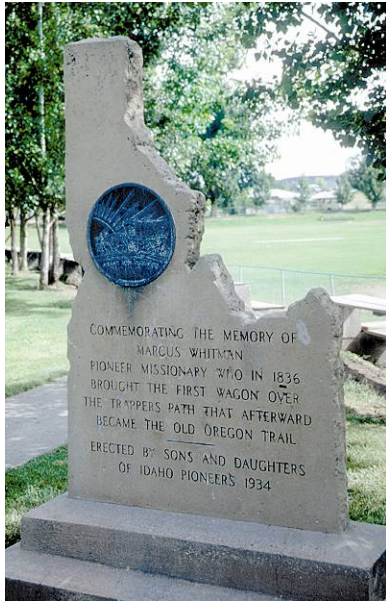
More than 600 fossil sites have been documented at different horizons within the sediments. The best known discovery is the Hagerman Horse (*Equus simplicidens*), now the official Idaho state fossil. The Hagerman Horse Quarry, a National Natural Landmark, is recognized as one of the most important sites in the world related to the fossil history of the horse. Also preserved are more than 200 species of vertebrates, invertebrates, and plants. The monument's high concentration

of sites depict a relatively short geological span of time and make it possible to understand geological events, environmental changes, and biodiversity in a way that is not possible for most fossil areas.

The **Hagerman Valley Historical Society Museum** is located in a historic brick building with wonderful arches at the corner of State and Main streets. During the spring, summer, and fall, it is open from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday; during the winter, it is open from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. only on Saturday and Sunday. Exhibits include a diorama of the famous Hagerman Horse, which depicts the savanna-like setting of 3.4 million years ago. The zebra-like horse is the largest in the chain of prehistoric horses, and is a replica cast from the original skeleton excavated locally by the Smithsonian Institution. Other displays include paintings of and by Archie Teater, a collection of Vardis Fisher books, historic research materials, and maps of the pioneer days.



Hagerman Valley Historical Society Museum
(Source: Jim Scott, City of Hagerman)



Monument Commemorating Marcus Whitman

► *Interpretive Value*

The small community of Hagerman and surrounding valley began as a Shoshone Indian fishing spot and later served as an important Oregon Trail stage station. Located near the Snake River's Lower Salmon Falls, the site was historically renowned for its large population of migrating salmon. When Stanley Hegeman and his partner Jack Hess arrived in the area, they applied for a post office under the name Hess. However, when the post office denied the name because too many other American cities were named Hess, the men reapplied for the name Hegeman. The post office accepted the suggestion, but in the process misspelled the name. Thus Hagerman was born.

Coltharp Park, located near the north end of town, provides accessible restrooms, and shaded picnic and recreation facilities, and is the site for family activities and regional softball tournaments each year. An Idaho-shaped monument commemorates Marcus Whitman, the pioneer missionary who brought the first wagon across what was later known as the Oregon Trail.

Volunteer Park, a pocket park in the center of Hagerman, features tables, interpretive signage, and an RV dump station.

In 1929, paleontologists from the Smithsonian Institution made the first scientific excavations at Hagerman Fossil Beds. A local rancher, Elmer Cook, had shown the fossil beds to a government geologist, Harold Stearns. The Smithsonian Institution finds led to more expeditions in the 1930s. Its National Museum of Natural History excavated 120 horse skulls and 20 complete skeletons from an area now called the Hagerman Horse Quarry. The Smithsonian exchanged some of these Hagerman horse skeletons with other museums, resulting in their display around the world.



Hagerman City Mayor Welcoming the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Advisory Committee to the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument Visitor Center



► *Site Recommendations*

- Prepare, fabricate, and install interpretive signs at Volunteer Park.
- Support the General Management Plan for the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument.
- Work with Hagerman to beautify entrances and accommodate needs of visitors (for example, parking, information, and services).
- Support and develop a shared visitor center within the City of Hagerman.

► *Site Improvements*

Improvement	Estimated Cost
Volunteer Park interpretive signage	\$2,500
General Management Plan for the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument	NA
City entrance beautification	\$2,500
Shared visitor center	\$2,000,000

► *Management*

Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument
City of Hagerman
Hagerman Valley Historical Society
Hagerman Chamber of Commerce
Hagerman I.D.E.A., Inc.
Adopt-a-Byway-Site Program



Site 6—Hagerman Fish and Wildlife Viewing Area

► *Location*

Directly off US-30 at Milepost 184

► *Classification*

Landmark Site

► *Existing Site Conditions*

Map signs at the entrance to the **Idaho State Fish Hatchery** show Riley Creek, Oster Lakes, Anderson Ponds, and Bass Ponds. The 35-acre hatchery is operated by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and produces 3 to 5 million rainbow trout annually for stocking in Idaho lakes and streams. Trout are raised to a minimum size, and then transferred to other hatcheries for planting. The site provides excellent fly and bait fishing, with ponds open seasonally. It is an excellent area for family fishing and great for kids. The hatchery is open to the public for viewing.

The **Hagerman Wildlife Management Area** preserves 880 acres of wetlands and riparian areas as wildlife habitat. The area remains ice-free year-round, thanks to its spring-fed waters, making it a haven for thousands of ducks and geese as well as peregrine falcons, ospreys, golden and bald eagles, and many upland game birds. Six miles of walking trails loop past numerous ponds and lakes open to anglers. Managed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the area offers upland game hunting.



Hagerman National Fish Hatchery
(Source: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)



Wildlife in the Hagerman Wildlife Management Area
(Source: Jim Scott, City of Hagerman)



Located 2 miles southeast of the state hatchery, the **Hagerman National Fish Hatchery** was established in 1933. The hatchery produces steelhead trout for release in Idaho's Salmon River as compensation for federal dams constructed on the lower Snake River. Operated by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the hatchery is open to the public for viewing, and tours are available for organized groups.

The **Hagerman Fish Culture Experiment Station (HFCES)** was established in 1998 by the University of Idaho to strengthen and expand aquaculture research and teaching capabilities. The station is located adjacent to the Hagerman National Fish Hatchery, and is at the center of Idaho's commercial aquaculture industry.

Just off US-30 near Anderson Ponds, the Idaho Transportation Department **Hagerman Rest Area** is one of the best rest areas in the state. This paved and heavily shaded rest area offers lawns, tables, restrooms, drinking water, and a dump station for RVs. One can walk over to the east side of the rest area and gaze out over Anderson Ponds, viewing ducks and geese with their young in season.

► *Interpretive Value*

No other place in the world has water like the Hagerman Valley. The water's perfect temperature and oxygen content are ideal for raising trout. The hatcheries rear trout and steelhead using the 58-degree F waters of Thousand Springs. The jade-green water is filled with darting trout. The University of Idaho Aquacultural Research Institute (part of the Hagerman Fish Culture Experiment Station) assists in the development and expansion of aquaculture statewide through research, education, and outreach in the areas of both commercial and conservation aquaculture. The station serves as a field laboratory where researchers study ways to promote sustainable aquaculture for commercial purposes, reduce the impact of fish farming on the aquatic environment, and find solutions to

fisheries conservation issues for salmon and other fresh-water species.

► *Site Recommendations*

- Prepare, fabricate, and install interpretive signs about the wildlife at the US-30 Hagerman Rest Area.
- Build a pathway and photography blind at the US-30 Hagerman Rest Area to view migratory waterfowl.
- Prepare signage and a brochure to provide side-trip information about Earl Hardy Box Canyon Springs, Niagara Springs, Crystal Springs, and Thousand Springs State Park.

► *Site Improvements*

Improvement	Estimated Cost
Interpretive signage	\$5,000
Pathway and photography blind	\$2,500
Side trip brochure and signage	\$5,000

► *Management*

Idaho Department of Fish and Game
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Idaho Transportation Department
University of Idaho Aquaculture Research Institute
Adopt-a-Byway-Site Program



Site 7—Thousand Springs State Park

► Location

Paved pullout on the south side of US-30 at Milepost 186.9. To reach the springs, drive north 1 mile to Vader Grade. Follow the grade road 1.5 miles east to the Idaho Power Company sign for the park. The road extends 4 miles southeast through a half-dozen doglegs, and then turns west down to the park next to the power plant.

► Classification

Landmark Site

► Existing Site Conditions

From US-30, one can see **Thousand Springs** flowing from the basalt bluff. The view across the Snake River features a number of waterfalls on the canyon wall, collectively called Thousand Springs. The highway provides good views of the springs from a distance, but no public access is available to the Snake River. The only public site is ITD's historic marker 166 (Thousand Springs). However, the pullout does not include a view of the springs.

Private services on the south side of the river include Sligar's Thousand Springs Resort, which offers indoor swimming year-round in a spacious pool fed by a hot spring, and tent and RV camping. A private boat ramp provides access to the Snake River. Scenic cruises on the 32-passenger *River's Mist* are operated by Thousand Springs Tours from the dock next to the boat ramp. The company offers short excursions along the Snake River to sites that include Thousand Springs waterfalls, Riley Creek Falls, and Blue Heart Springs.

As the accompanying historic photograph shows, the springs once appeared as a long, giant waterfall cascading in white foam from the heights above. It was a beautiful and awe-

inspiring sight before the waters were harnessed for electrical power. Although reduced in flow, Thousand Springs remains a unique natural site. The springs are the outlet of buried rivers that get lost in lava terrain 150 miles to the northeast. The natural phenomenon is one of kind.

In late 2006, The Nature Conservancy donated the 310-acre Thousand Springs Preserve (which runs along and below the rim of the Snake River) to the State of Idaho. The generous gift includes Ritter Island (which houses an historic dairy) and 2 miles of riverfront cliffs flowing with water that first seeped into the ground over 200 years ago and a \$1 million endowment fund for maintenance and preservation. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation will manage the new acquisition along with Malad Gorge, Billingsley Creek, Niagara Springs, and Box Canyon—all now part of the new **Thousand Springs State Park**.



Early Hand-tinted Photograph of Thousand Springs
(Source: Wesley Andrews)



Water tumbles down countless falls, sustaining green plants even in January. Prairie falcons and golden eagles frequent the area and the clear waters provide habitat to the Shoshone sculpin, a 9 centimeter spiky bottom-feeder fish found only at Thousand Springs. For 14 years, the annual Festival of the Arts has attracted visitors for a weekend of arts, crafts, music, food, and island exploration. (Source: Gregory Hahn, "Conservancy Gives \$1 Million to Maintain Thousand Springs," *Idaho Statesman*, December 26, 2007.)

The park also includes Ritter Creek and the Minnie Miller Falls overlook. The historic Payne/Lewis ferry crossed the Snake River at the south end of Ritter Island. Nearby, the Idaho Power Company maintains a picnic park and the castle-style historic **Thousand Springs Power Plant**, which was built between 1906 and 1913. Visitors can canoe around the island or picnic at the adjacent Thousand Springs Power Plant Park.



Thousand Springs Power Plant Park

► Side Trips

East of Thousand Springs, River Road winds along the Snake River for approximately 5 miles to Buhl and provides an optional route. A fine feature along the river and visible from the byway is a prominent heron rookery. South Central Idaho produces most of the commercially raised trout in the U.S., and Clear Springs Foods provides a glimpse of aquaculture at its visitor center along Clear Lake Road. Also along River Road are greenhouses and homes that use geothermal water for heating, hatcheries that use geothermal water for raising tilapia fish and alligators, and geothermal spas.

► Interpretive Value

Elizabeth Wood, Oregon Trail emigrant, August 15, 1851:

"On the opposite side of the river from us is springs flowing out to the wall of a rock large enough to turn a mill; it is a very beautiful stream, clear as crystal, and runs so rapidly that it looks white as ice as it flows over the rock, and



Thousand Springs Power Plant



roars like a mill race. We got some Salmon of the Indians here."

Thousand Springs was a landmark noted by emigrants on the Oregon Trail, who followed the south side of the river from Twin Falls to Upper Salmon Falls, near Hagerman. The water is believed to come from the Lost River, which sinks into the ground about 150 miles to the northeast and flows through a lava-rock aquifer.



Snake River Ferry near Thousand Springs
(Source: Idaho State Historical Society)

In 1911, the flow was harvested by the Thousand Springs Power Company of Arizona, when it built a 400-foot concrete collection flume along the upper face of the springs and channeled the water down the penstock to the powerhouse's electric turbines 165 feet below the canal. Idaho Power Company purchased the utility in 1917. The historic power plant's architecture features a handsome fort-like building with a tower and battlements (as shown in the previous illustration).

Today, the Snake River meanders 1,110 miles, descending over 8,500 feet from the mountains of Yellowstone National Park to the Columbia River near Kennewick, Washington. In Hells Canyon, the river boils through the nation's deepest gorge—7,900 feet, one-third mile deeper than the Grand Canyon. From headwaters to mouth, the Snake River drains 3.7 percent of the total land area of the lower 48 states. Rated by volume of water carried, it is American's sixth largest river, and the tenth longest.

► Site Recommendations

- Prepare a development plan for a portion of public riverfront facing Thousand Springs.
- Purchase a piece of Snake River frontage in accordance with the development plan.
- Develop a public interpretive site with ferry dock, signage, and parking.
- Develop cross-river transportation to Ritter Island.
- Consider the option for a Bureau of Land Management viewing area on the hillside above the road level of US-30.
- Prepare, fabricate, and install interpretive signs regarding the area's hydrology, geology, and ferries.
- Install landscape screening and/or fencing along the roadway at the east end of the Thousand Springs Resort.



► *Site Improvements*

Improvement	Estimated Cost
Development plan	\$25,000
Snake River frontage	Amount unknown
Public interpretive site with ferry dock	\$50,000
Cross-river transportation to Ritter Island	No cost (contract with concessionaire)
Hillside viewing area	\$50,000
Interpretive signage	\$15,000
Landscape screening or fencing	\$5,000

► *Management*

Idaho Power Company
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
Southern Idaho Land Trust
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Adopt-a-Byway-Site Program



Site 8—City of Buhl

► *Location*

Main Street, Milepost 201

► *Classification*

Landmark Site

► *Existing Site Conditions*

Downtown Buhl possesses a tremendous asset in its expressive architecture. Examples include the post office, Ramona Theater, IOOF Hall, Cosmic Jolt, and Stone Hall Antiques. New sidewalks, lighting, and landscaping provide good pedestrian access in this compact, easily walkable downtown. Close by are two city parks, a city pool, and a world-class skateboard park. Buhl provides a full range of services for both residents and travelers. The Buhl Sagebrush Days event honors local history every Fourth of July weekend.

Buhl, a rural agricultural community, lies at an elevation of 3,790 feet and is flanked by rolling country on the east. The area is a key producer in agriculture and aquaculture. Buhl's sweet corn is the country's choicest, and the local trout are served at fine restaurants throughout the country. The city center has active revitalization projects underway.

Buhl has the opportunity to expand its visitor and tourism economy. An expanded visitor industry is a good option for helping diversify the local economy, given Buhl's unique downtown, numerous nearby visitor attractions, and location on the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway. Buhl can serve as a base camp, providing hotel rooms, RV camping, restaurants, services, special events, and shopping.

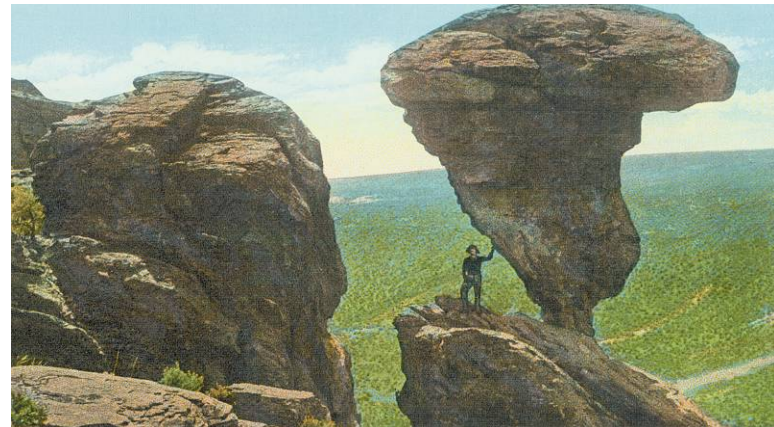
The **Buhl Visitor Center and Chamber of Commerce** office located at the east edge of town provides local and regional information. It is maintained by a full-time staff, with year-round service and programs. Adjacent to the center is a RV dump facility.

Eighth Street Center, a cultural beacon of South Central Idaho, opened in a renovated church in 1999 along with the headquarters for the Buhl Arts Council. Programming includes exhibits, concerts, and classes.

A new **Rusty Engine Museum** opened in downtown Buhl in 2006. Other side-trips include visits to Clear Springs Grade, Valley View Lavender Farm, and Blue Rock Vineyard.

► *Side Trips*

Balanced Rock is a tower of stone located 17 miles south of Buhl near Castleford. A geologic phenomenon, this balloon-shaped formation is 40 feet in height and rests upon a small block of igneous stone that is only 1 foot by 1-1/2 feet by 3 feet in dimensions. Weathered by centuries on so small a base, it stands precariously as a wonder for everyone who sees it.



Postcard of Balanced Rock



The site is part of the Twin Falls County **Balanced Rock Park**. Needed improvements include adding directional guide signs and upgrading nearby Salmon Falls Creek interpretation and facilities.

Nearby, several outstanding **historic barns** illustrate a variety of unique construction details. Just east of Buhl, five particularly large and handsome barns can be seen in a short loop trip. The George Watt barn, built in 1910-1911, is an especially handsome superstructure seated upon a head-high foundation of lava rock. It has shed dormers, a small cupola, and a Dutch gambrel roof. Local barn builder Henry Schick's own barn features a gambrel-flared dormer with onion-dome caps on the ventilators and silo. The barn housed Schick's dairy herd and a dairy-cow weather vane is the finishing touch.

Diagonally across from the Schick barn is the monumental concrete dairy barn built in 1911 by Schick. Apparently it is the largest barn of its age in the state. It was built for Gustave Kunze, a cheesemaker who had established a factory in Tillamook, Oregon, in 1891. Another historic barn is the Max Dau barn built around 1917. It is executed in frame and concrete with distinctive bold filigreed metal ventilators. The Homling barn, now called Granny's and used for community functions, features a broad low massing with a low-pitched roof and rugged stone construction.

► *Interpretive Value*

On April 17, 1906, lots were drawn for the town site of Buhl. Buhl was laid out on a diagonal, with the Buhl Hotel the first building constructed. When Walter G. Filer, general manager of the Twin Falls Land and Water Company and director of the Twin Falls Town Site Company, was placed in charge of Buhl city planning, he hired Mr. Hayes and Mr. Bickel of Twin Falls to lay out the town and oversee initial hotel construction. They were so satisfied with the Twin Falls plat that they surveyed and staked out the Buhl town site the same way. Filer wanted a town site on east and west, north and south lines, but Bickel

responded that the hotel was already being built on the block indicated and that it would be impossible to resurvey the town site straight with the world and avoid awkward placement of the town's main building. The Buhl Hotel proved to be an elegant structure. On the Broadway side was a charming balcony, beneath which was a portico. Through this, one entered the grand dining room, which offered excellent meals, red velvet carpeting, fine linens, silver and crystal—things unheard of in tough pioneering county.

► *Site Recommendations*

- Prepare, fabricate, and install interpretive signs.
- Prepare and publish self-guided tours for the downtown and for the barns.
- Support a program to rehabilitate buildings to recapture their former architecture.
- Enhance entryways. Buhl's entrances need to present an attractive and informative first impression. Proposed improvements include upgraded signage and tree planting.

► *Site Improvements*

Improvement	Estimated Cost
Interpretive signage	\$10,000
Self-guided tours	\$1,000
Entryway enhancement	\$2,500

► *Management*

City of Buhl
Buhl Chamber of Commerce
Rusty Engine Museum
Twin Falls County Department of Parks & Waterways
Adopt-a-Byway-Site Program



Site 9—Twin Falls County Historical Museum and Visitor Center

► *Location*

US-30, 3-1/2 miles west of Twin Falls and
US-30, 3-1/2 miles east of Filer

► *Classification*

Landmark Site

► *Existing Site Conditions*

The Twin Falls County Historical Museum is housed in the Union School Building. The original two-room, wood-frame schoolhouse built in 1907 burned to the ground in 1913. The schoolhouse was rebuilt in 1914 and functioned as an



Inside the Twin Falls County Historical Museum

elementary school until the spring of 1968 when, as the last country school in the Twin Falls District, it was closed. The Twin Falls County Historical Museum opened its doors to visitors in 1969. On March 20, 2003, the Union School was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The museum offers a fascinating introduction to what put the “magic” in Magic Valley. In addition to the main building, there is a pioneer house, a frontier house containing a carpenter’s shop, a livery, and a butcher shop. The original Clarence Bisbee photo collection is also housed at the museum and provides a pictorial history of the creation of Twin Falls County. Historic farm machines, steam engines, wagons, an extensive clothing collection, and antique furniture provide a glimpse of “the old days” and the challenges of the pioneers who settled this area. The site also offers picnic tables, shade trees, and a large playground suitable for any type of gathering, including reunions, organizational meetings, and family get-togethers.

Tour guides are available to interpret and answer visitors’ questions. The site is open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and by appointment. Additional information may be obtained by calling (208) 736-4675 or by emailing tfcountymuseum@msn.com.

► *Side Trips*

Three miles west of the Twin Falls County Historical Museum, Filer is a thriving community of 1,719 (2004) residents. Filer is strategically located just west of the intersection of US-93 and US-30 and nearly one mile square. The community was named for Walter Filer, general manager of the Twin Falls Canal Company.

Twin Falls Rock Creek Park is 2 miles east of the Twin Falls County Historical Museum. The park offers picnic facilities, playground shelters, and an extensive pathway system along the creek for day use. Camping and RV facilities overlooking the park are available by means of the entrance on US-30 adjacent to the park. Oregon Trail wagon trains crossed Rock Creek near



here following the south side of the canyon rim where it branches west of Filer. This branch was traveled heavily by Kelton Road freight-wagon traffic.

Cedar Draw Creek Park, an excellent rest area with covered picnic tables, is 3-1/2 miles west of the museum and is easily accessible from US-30. A small segment of the Oregon Trail and Kelton Road remnants can be discerned at Cedar Creek. After 1904, Carey Act canals brought agricultural development to the area. Cedar Draw School is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Labor Day 2006 Celebration at Cedar Draw Creek Park
(Source: Shari Hart)

► *Interpretive Value*

Twin Falls County was founded in 1907. Within two years, the town of Twin Falls became a regional trade center and a worldwide leader in irrigation and waterways. The adjoining town of Filer was settled in 1906. Filer is the site of the annual Twin Falls County Fair and Rodeo, in which residents of the entire Magic Valley participate. In 1908, 500 poplar and box elder trees were purchased by H. H. Schildman, cashier of the Filer State Bank and owner of the Mercantile Store. These were planted among Midway and Yakima Streets and many of them remain today, creating a relaxing, shady drive close to the fairground.

► *Site Recommendations*

- Prepare and fabricate an upgraded museum sign.
- Improve access and expand parking.
- Support the expanding site and improve facilities.

► *Site Improvements*

Improvement	Estimated Cost
Museum signage	\$2,500
Parking improvement and expansion	\$5,000
Expanded museum and improvement of facilities	\$25,000

► *Management*

Twin Falls County Historical Society
Twin Falls County
Twin Falls Chamber of Commerce
City of Filer
Adopt-a-Byway-Site Program



Site 10—City of Twin Falls and Buzz Langdon Visitor Center

► Location

City of Twin Falls (US-30 and US-93 at the Perrine Bridge, north edge of the city)

► Classification

Landmark Site

► Existing Site Conditions

Where the scenic Snake River meets fertile farm ground, Twin Falls has long been the center of commerce and entertainment for the eight counties of South Central Idaho. **Historic Downtown Twin Falls** is the central business district and is home to unique shops, galleries, pubs, and eateries. A person can stroll down shady Main Street and enjoy the art galleries and turn-of-the-century architecture, and browse for everything from antiques, kitchen gadgets, and fine wine to jewelry and home furnishings. Just a block from Main Street is City Park, the site of many civic events and home to one of the nation's oldest band shells and longest-playing municipal bands. Twin Falls is a robust economic engine in the State of Idaho, ranking high in the state in the number of jobs created. There is plenty for visitors to do here, whether they are seeking adventure or culture, exploring history, or just relaxing.

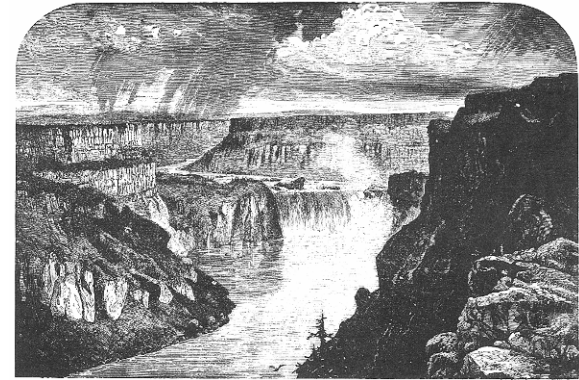
The Herrett Center for Arts and Science on the College of Southern Idaho Campus is home to the largest public telescope in the Northwest and is one of the finest planetariums. A variety of planetarium shows is available to the public at a nominal fee. Three galleries include one of the premier anthropology collections in the Northwest and art exhibitions that celebrate our culture.

Just 4 miles from Historic Downtown Twin Falls are **Shoshone Falls and Dierkes Lake Park**.

Surrounded by amazing canyon vistas, Shoshone Falls tumbles 212 feet to the mighty Snake River below.

Visitors can take advantage of the new Centennial Trail and fishing and non-motorized boating in this beautiful park, and swimming at neighboring Dierkes Lake. Higher than Niagara Falls, Shoshone Falls is best viewed in the spring of high-runoff years before water is put to work irrigating agricultural lands. The park is open year-round; an admission is charged in the summer season (\$3 per car and \$20 per bus).

What do you want to do today? Whatever a visitor wants to do is available. There are trails to hike or climb or bike—including the Centennial Trail that traverses the rim of the Snake River Canyon and provides views of the surrounding mountains and high desert. The Perrine Bridge is the only bridge in the United States where it is legal to BASE jump and as such attracts extreme-



Lithograph of Shoshone Falls
(Source: *The Resources and Attractions of Idaho Territory 1881*)



I. B. Perrine Monument



sport enthusiasts (BASE stands for Building/Antenna/Span/Earth, representing fixed objects from which jumps are made). The Snake River also attracts those with more traditional activities in mind—canoeing, whitewater rafting, fishing, and other water sports. There are 12 golf courses within a 40-mile radius of Twin Falls for the enthusiast. Seasonal sports such as skiing, snowmobiling, birding, and hunting attract visitors to the area as well.

► *Side Trips*

The **Idaho Farm & Ranch Museum** is located at Exit 173 off I-84 at US-93. The museum contains many fine specimens of old farm equipment and original buildings from the surrounding area. There is an exhibit from the World War II Minidoka Japanese Relocation Camp that was located at Hunt, Idaho, in Jerome County. **Live History Day**, held on the second Saturday in June each year, features many people portraying life at the turn of the century in Jerome County. During the rest of the year, special tours are available by calling the museum office.

Jerome is located just 10 miles from Twin Falls and the downtown features diverse shops and markets for browsing. Each August, Jerome is home to **Joe Mama's Car Show**, the area's single largest one-day event.

Travel north 25 miles to **Shoshone**, home of the widest Main Street in Idaho. Take the walking tour and enjoy the architecture and history of this small community.

► *Interpretive Value*

The majestic Snake River Canyon was created by the Bonneville Flood, which roared down from prehistoric Lake Bonneville through southeastern Idaho's Red Rock Pass about 15,000 years ago. The gorge is spanned by Perrine Bridge, a 1,500-foot engineering marvel standing 486 feet above the river. When the first Perrine Bridge was completed in 1927, it was the highest

cantilever bridge for its length in the world. The present span was completed in 1976.

Higher than Niagara Falls, Shoshone Falls was first discovered by Wilson Price Hunt in 1811. For many decades, this gigantic water feature was the chief attraction in Idaho for the thousands of emigrants passing through to Oregon. Although located 5 miles north of the Oregon Trail, some emigrants were attracted to this 212-foot waterfall on the Snake River by its roar, which could be heard for miles.

The architecture and history of the historic downtown need to be interpreted, carefully collaborating with the Historical Society and Historical Preservation and City of Twin Falls.

- Document the architecture.
- Document the early history of Twin Falls.
- Document the history of the unique layout of Twin Falls.
- Use Bisbee photos in the interpretative documents.

Interpretation of the Shoshone Falls/Dierkes Lake area should be done in conjunction and collaboration with the Idaho Power Company, which works with Twin Falls.

- Document hydropower in the commercial development of area.
- Document the historical significance of the original powerhouse (still in use).
- Interpret the Bonneville Flood at the Buzz Langdon Visitor Center.
- Interpret the significance of recreation in the area.



Numerous artists roamed the western frontier and documented the nation's scenic sites. When professional artists like Thomas Moran and James Everett Stuart came west, their routes through the region usually included a stop at Shoshone Falls, one of southern Idaho's widely known and most remarkable landmarks. The most famous image of the falls, 11 feet in length and currently housed in Oklahoma's Gilcrease Museum, was created by Thomas Moran in 1900 and is the epitome of the romantic and sublime in western art. Testifying to world-class scenic beauty, many painters have depicted Shoshone Falls and other byway sites. One of the earliest was "On the Snake River" painted by John Mix Stanley in the 1850s. Paintings by Joseph McMeekin offer a time-capsule view of rural southern Idaho between 1890 and 1910. For over 20 years, McMeekin lived at Millet Island and painted the atmospheric landscape of the Snake River canyon near Hagerman.

► *Site Recommendations*

- Support plans by Historic Downtown Twin Falls for improving and promoting Historic Downtown Twin Falls.
- Protect the area's natural resources and byway through coordinated management among state, federal, and local agencies and NGOs.
- Support plans by the College of Southern Idaho and other organizations for improving and promoting the Herrett Center of Arts and Sciences.
- Support the plans of the Twin Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and Idaho Transportation Department for improving and promoting the Buzz Langdon Visitor Center.

► *Site Improvements*

No costs associated with specific site improvements at this time.

► *Management*

City of Twin Falls
Twin Falls Chamber of Commerce
Twin Falls County
College of Southern Idaho
Idaho Transportation Department
Southern Idaho Tourism
Historic Downtown Twin Falls
Jerome Chamber of Commerce
City of Shoshone



Site 11—Hansen Bridge Overlook

► Location

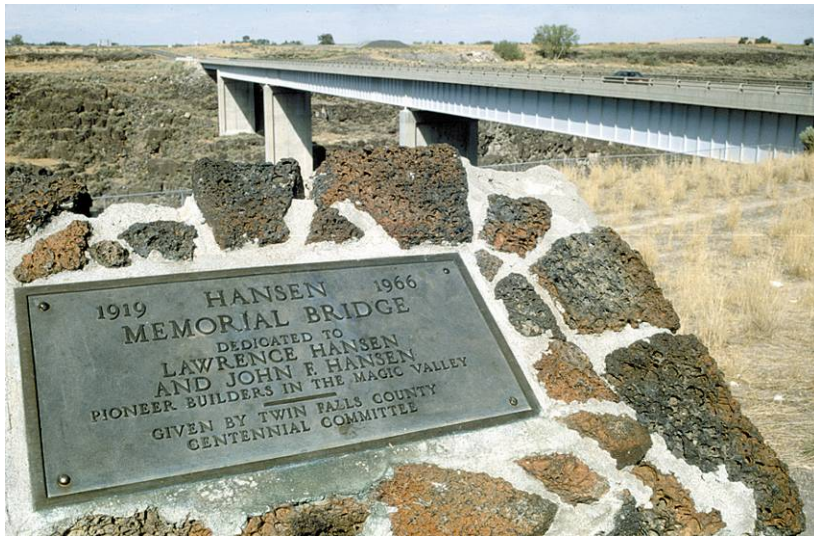
South end of the Hansen Bridge, Milepost 227.3

► Classification

Point of Interest

► Existing Site Conditions

The paved Hansen Bridge Overlook includes parking, a rock monument, historic marker 393 (Hansen Bridge), and the name plate for the 1919 original bridge. Sensational views from the overlook are provided of the beryl-green Snake River with its ragged cliffs and dazzling beauty. A trail extends along the rim on adjacent BLM land.



Hansen Bridge Monument and Bridge Over Snake River

► Interpretive Value

Until 1919, when a high suspension bridge was completed here, the river gorge could be crossed only in a rowboat. With 14 cables, each more than 900 feet long, a \$100,000 suspension bridge was wide enough to accommodate two lanes of farm wagons or early cars. From the bridge deck, nearly 400 feet above the Snake River, travelers had a spectacular view that can still be seen from the replacement bridge built in 1966.



Postcard of Original 1919 Suspension Bridge

► Side Trips

Nearby points of interest, described below, should be interpreted at the overlook.

- **Hansen**
This city bears the name of pioneer merchant John Hansen, who was also county superintendent of schools, recorder, and probate judge, and commissioner of the U.S. Land Office.



- **Kimberly**
Peter Kimberly was one of the Pennsylvania financiers of the Twin Falls South Side Project. The town was founded in 1906. Its handsome and compact downtown offers many services.
- **Rock Creek Station**
The Rock Creek Station was built by Ben Holladay in 1864. The following year, a store was built. It was purchased by Herman Stricker a decade later. The Stricker store became the first trading post along the Oregon Trail west of Fort Hall. For years, the area was a popular emigrant campsite. After the opening of the Kelton Road in 1869, the area served freight and stage traffic. The log store, two stone cellars, and Stricker's 1900 home are still intact. The station has recently been rebuilt as a visitor center by the Idaho State Historical Society, which manages the site.



Posing in Front of Rock Creek Station
(Source: Idaho State Historical Society)

- **South Hills, Magic Mountain**
The county road enters the gorge between spectacular basalt ramparts and gradually ascends the drainage for 14 miles. The typical desert flora of sage, rabbitbrush, cottonwoods, and junipers soon gives way to ponderosa and lodge pole pine, and finally quaking aspen and subalpine fir at an elevation of 7,000 feet. The pavement ends at the Magic Mountain Ski Area.



County Road to South Hills and Magic Mountain

The South Hills provide a variety of recreation, including good trails for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, skiing, all-terrain vehicles, and snowmobiles. Pike Mountain offers outstanding views in all directions. Facilities include several campgrounds and picnic areas. The site is managed by the Twin Falls Ranger District of the Sawtooth National Forest.



► Site Recommendations

- Continue the improvements to the Hansen Bridge Overlook according to the Hansen Bridge Overlook Concept Plan (see **Figure 3-2**). In 2006, \$15,000 was received from ITD as an Enhancement Grant for initial improvements. The eastern gateway of the byway warrants improved interpretive information and site enhancement. The overlook would include an interpretive kiosk, picnic tables, a stone-wall barrier, and a path connecting to adjacent BLM land.

Partners who participated in developing and implementing the plan include the following:

- Gary Bates—U.S. Forest Service
- Bill Brockman, Gary Grindstaff, and Tom Mikesell—Twin Falls County Commissioners
- Mark Brunelle—Director, Twin Falls County Research and Development
- Martha Carlson—Martha Carlson Design
- Chuck Carnohan—Idaho Transportation Department
- Chuck Coiner and Kip Wooten, L.L.C—Adjacent Landowners
- James Gose Ell—Superintendent, Twin Falls County Parks & Waterways
- Linda Morrill—Clerk, City of Hansen
- Jackie Smith—Coordinator, Twin Falls County Community Service
- Julie Thomas—Mid-Snake River RC&D
- Support improvements and increased staffing at Rock Creek Station.
- Create a small park in Hansen to orient visitors to the city, Rock Creek Station, and the South Hills.
- Prepare and publish walking tours for downtown Kimberly and Hansen.

► Site Improvements

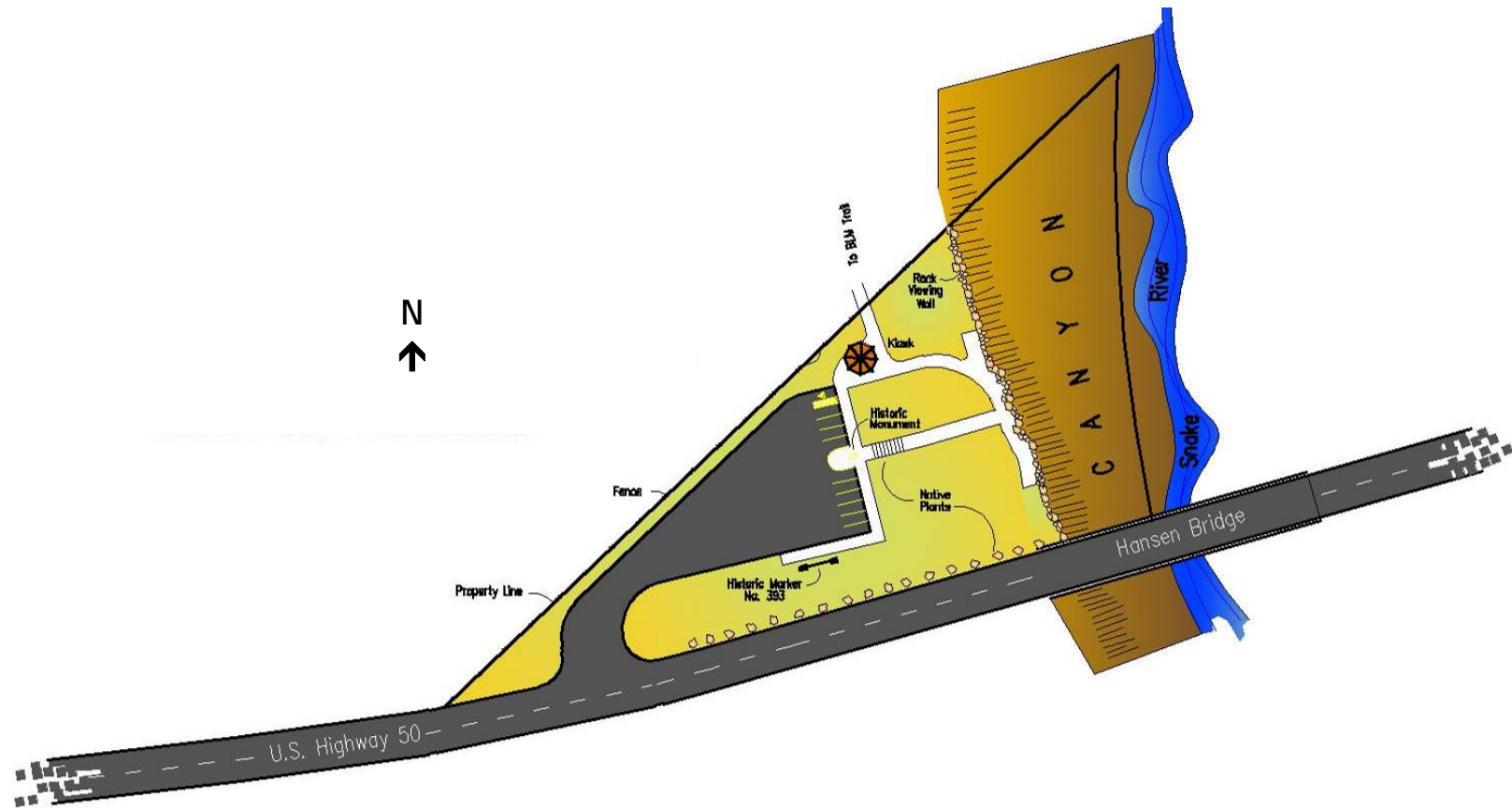
Improvement	Estimated Cost
Hansen Bridge Overlook improvements	\$25,000
Improvements and increased staffing at Rock Creek Station	\$20,000
Hansen Park	\$10,000
Walking tours	\$1,000

► Management

Idaho Transportation Department
 City of Hansen
 City of Kimberly
 Twin Falls County
 U.S. Forest Service-Sawtooth National Forest
 Idaho State Historical Society
 Adopt-a-Byway-Site Program



Figure 3-2. Hansen Bridge Overlook Concept Plan
(currently being implemented)





◆ Byway Signage Plan

The signage plan for the byway involves upgrading existing signage along the corridor and at byway sites. Directional guide signs for the 11 sites along the byway are a top priority. Recommendations include upgrading entrance signage at the gateway community of Bliss and at the byway's eastern entrance at Hansen Bridge Overlook.

A critical component of signage is the development of visitor interpretation at the 11 sites. Together, the sites will tell a story of the byway's Snake River Canyon, geology, nature, and history. It is the goal of the *Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan* to identify and develop a unified signage plan that is easily understood as well as successful at giving good, detailed direction.



Shoshone Falls Guide Sign

Byway Portal Signage

Upgraded byway portal site signage would identify the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway at the western entrance of Bliss and at the eastern byway entrance at Hansen Bridge Overlook. As illustrated under the description of Site 1, the Bliss Gateway Park would provide initial information to byway visitors. Likewise, the Hansen Bridge Overlook (Site 11) would provide information and spectacular scenic views of the Snake River Canyon. Orientation would help visitors plan their schedules and provide trip and safety messages.

Figure 3-3 illustrates the mapboard that currently depicts Thousand Springs Scenic Byway sites and side trips for visitors. It is an effective guide and should be replaced with an updated mapboard that depicts the 11 sites identified in this plan.



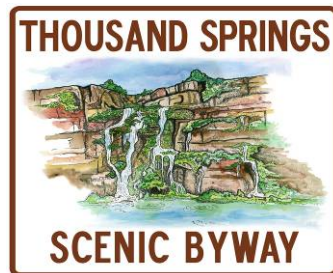
Figure 3-3. Current Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Mapboard





Byway Route Markers

The colorful Thousand Springs Scenic Byway route marker has been installed along the byway. The byway marker/logo should be added to all directional signs and used extensively to unify all aspects of the byway, from promotional strategies such as brochures and advertising to signage at each key site.

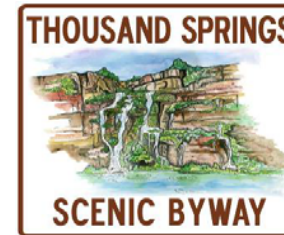


Byway Route Marker

Byway Point-of-Interest Markers

At each site, a 3-by-3-foot byway route marker with a supplemental Point-of-Interest sign below would have the name and an arrow to designate the required turning movement. Nationally approved symbols for information, recreation, and cultural facilities should be incorporated whenever possible. These symbols help accommodate international travelers.

Site signs should be strategically located to help visitors navigate the byway and discover opportunities, such as trails, overlooks, and picnic areas. Consistent style and placement of signs will help visitors recognize that they are approaching a byway facility even before the sign can be read.



Byway Point-of-Interest Marker

Advance and Turn Signage

Located approximately 1/4 mile ahead of the entrance to each key site, a byway route marker sign alerts visitors. At the entrance to each key site, a byway turn sign indicates the entry.

Mileposts

Mileposts at the end of each mile should be maintained to help identify the distance along the byway.

Interpretive Signage

Within and adjacent to the right-of-way, interpretive signs, kiosks, overlooks, and other facilities can enhance the traveler's experience by explaining the scenery and history of the area. Additional interpretative signs are proposed that inform travelers about the byway's scenic, historic, geologic, natural, and cultural significance, to instill respect for what they are seeing and experiencing.



Interpretive Strategies

The common theme linking the byway is its scenery, the Snake River, nature, history and geology. From Native Americans, early explorers, trappers, Oregon Trail pioneers, and automobile travel, the byway presents a compelling history. Interpretation of byway resources should be to educate travelers, to improve their understanding and appreciation of these resources and to enhance their travel experience. Interpretation should inspire and provoke interest. Descriptive information will be conveyed through both text and graphics, such as maps, sketches and photographs. Text will be descriptive and informative and geared toward the general public.

The Thousand Spring Scenic Byway Advisory Committee and its partners are gathering resource data, inventories, and text to prepare an interpretive story for each of the 11 sites. Additionally, they will create a chronology of important events that occurred along the byway. As additional marketing tools, marketing and traveler information strategies could be developed, such as publishing global positioning system (GPS) waypoints and traveler information radio.



4

HIGHWAY SAFETY AND MANAGEMENT

◆ Overview

The Thousand Springs Scenic Byway corridor was originally the main thoroughfare between Eden, Twin Falls, and Bliss, Idaho. The roadway provided connections between the communities of Eden, Hansen, Twin Falls, Filer, Buhl, Hagerman, and Bliss and was also used for transporting most of the area's agricultural products from "farm to market." Construction of I-84 in the 1960s diverted much of the traffic that the byway route formerly carried to the high-speed, full-access-control, divided interstate highway. With this change, the byway became more of a local road, but continued to provide farm-to-market access. The beautiful vistas and unique features of the Thousand Springs area caused the byway to become a popular tourist route.

The byway is comprised of three sections of state highway that were constructed as part of the Federal Aid Primary System (FAPS):

- ▶ US-30
- ▶ US-93
- ▶ State Highway 50 (SH-50)

These three highways are still part of FAPS and are maintained by the ITD, which make them eligible for federal highway maintenance and construction dollars.

The average daily traffic (ADT) along the byway between Bliss and Buhl ranges from 1,600 to 3,800 vehicles per day (vpd). The ADT increases to 24,600 vpd as the byway approaches Twin Falls. In comparison, the ADT along I-84 is more than 12,000 vpd. The lower volume of traffic is advantageous for the rural portion of the byway because it provides opportunities for more interpretive stops along the route without compromising safety and access.

Except for the portions of the byway between Twin Falls and Filer, within Hagerman, and within Twin Falls, much of the byway is a two-lane rural roadway. (See **Table 4-1** for an overview of byway roadway characteristics.) As was pointed out in the *Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan* (August 1998), the rural characteristics of the byway enhance the "intrinsic nature" of the route but the often large, slow-moving farm equipment combined with tourists unfamiliar with the route create a potential for accidents. The need for the byway to accommodate these two factors must be considered as the byway is promoted and resulting development occurs.



Table 4-1. Byway Roadway Characteristics

Notes to the table:

* Due to limitations of the Highway Capacity Manual software computations in urban areas, the LOS for these segments was estimated based on field observations rather than calculated results.

** V/C (Volume to Capacity ratio) not calculated.

LOS = Level of service (see page 4-6 for an explanation).

ADT = Average Daily Traffic (24 hours).

Location	Mile Post	No. Lanes	2006 ADT	2006 LOS	2006 V/C Ratio	2026 ADT	2026 LOS	2026 V/C Ratio	Projected Growth (%)	% Trucks	Terrain	Shoulder Width (ft)	Speed Limit (mph)
US-30													
City of Bliss	172.60	2	1,610	A	0.10	1,980	A	0.13	1.0%	18	Rural—rolling	4	60
Scenic overlook—byway entry	174.90	3	1,610	A	0.10	1,980	A	0.13	1.0%	18	Rural—mountainous	3 to 4	60
Historical Site #300	175.71	3	1,610	A	0.10	1,980	A	0.13	1.0%	18	Rural—mountainous	3 to 4	60
End of passing section	176.30	3	1,610	A	0.10	1,980	A	0.13	1.0%	18	Rural—mountainous	3 to 4	60
Malad Bridge	177.44	2	1,610	A	0.10	1,980	A	0.13	1.0%	18	Rural—mountainous	3 to 4	60
North end—Hagerman	180.62	4	2,830	B*	**	3,410	B*	**	0.9%	4	Urban—curbed	NA	25
South end—Hagerman	181.31	2	3,840	B	0.14	4,620	B	0.17	0.9%	3	Rural—flat	3 to 4	45
Fish Hatchery State Park	184.66	2	2,120	A	0.08	2,560	A	0.09	0.9%	5	Rural—flat	3 to 4	60
Gridley Bridge	185.42	2	2,120	A	0.11	2,560	B	0.14	0.9%	5	Rural—rolling	NA	60
Historical Site #166	186.97	2	1,500	A	0.09	1,820	A	0.10	1.0%	9.5	Rural—rolling	4	60
Passing section—up hill—beginning	190.88	3	1,500	A	0.09	1,820	A	0.10	1.0%	9.5	Rural—rolling	4	60

Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan



Location	Mile Post	No. Lanes	2006 ADT	2006 LOS	2006 V/C Ratio	2026 ADT	2026 LOS	2026 V/C Ratio	Projected Growth (%)	% Trucks	Terrain	Shoulder Width (ft)	Speed Limit (mph)
Passing section—up hill—end	191.19	3	1,500	A	0.09	1,820	A	0.10	1.0%	9.5	Rural—rolling	4	60
Ring Corner	196.00	2	1,820	A	0.10	2,220	A	0.13	1.0%	9.5	Rural—rolling	3 to 4	30
Black Bear Corner	197.98	2	1,820	A	0.10	2,220	A	0.13	1.0%	9.5	Rural—rolling	4	30
West end—Buhl	200.82	2	4,140	B*	**	5,000	B*	**	0.9%	4	Urban—curbed	NA	25
East end—Buhl	202.45	2	9,900	D	0.35	11,910	D	0.42	0.9%	3	Urban—curbed	NA	25
Cedar Park Draw—west end—Filer	210.08	5	6,160	A*	**	7,430	A*	**	0.9%	3	Rural—flat	6 to 8	35
East end—Filer	210.62	5	9,290	A	**	11,180	A	**	0.9%	3	Urban—curbed	NA	35
US-93/US-30 interchange	212.09	5	9,090	A	**	12,860	A	**	1.7%	2	Urban—curbed	NA	45
Twin Falls city limits	216.94	5	24,600	B	**	36,600	C	**	2.0%	1	Urban—curbed	NA	45
West end—Twin Falls east-bound couplet	216.94	3	15,230	C*	**	19,760	D*	**	1.3%	1	Urban—curbed	NA	35
East end—Twin Falls east-bound couplet	218.67	3	9,850	B*	**	12,800	B*	**	1.3%	1	Urban—curbed	NA	35
West end—Twin Falls west-bound couplet	217.28	3	6,400	B*	**	8,300	B*	**	1.3%	1	Urban—curbed	NA	35
East end—Twin Falls west-bound couplet	218.57	3	14,210	C*	**	18,510	C*	**	1.3%	2	Urban—curbed	NA	35
Blue Lakes Blvd. and US-30 East	218.67	5	21,330	F*	**	27,930	F*	**	1.4%	2	Urban—curbed	NA	35

Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan



Location	Mile Post	No. Lanes	2006 ADT	2006 LOS	2006 V/C Ratio	2026 ADT	2026 LOS	2026 V/C Ratio	Projected Growth (%)	% Trucks	Terrain	Shoulder Width (ft)	Speed Limit (mph)
East end—Twin Falls urban section	220.67	5	11,130	C*	**	13,690	C*	**	1.0%	16.5	Urban—curbed	NA	35
US-30/SH-50 intersection	223.51	2	8,300	C	0.30	10,140	D	0.37	1.0%	12	Rural—flat	6 to 8	50
SH-50													
SH-50/US-30 intersection	0.00	2	4,760	B	0.18	5,920	B	0.22	1.1%	24	Rural—flat	6 to 8	50
Hansen Bridge	3.95	2	8,710	C	0.32	10,810	D	0.39	1.1%	22	Rural—flat		50
SH-50/I-84 interchange	4.79	4	5,560	A*	**	6,730	A*	**	1.0%	6	Rural—flat	6 to 8	50
US-93													
US-93/US-30 interchange	212.59	5	9,090	B*	**	12,860	C*	**	1.7%	8	Rural—flat	8 to 9	45
Railroad crossing (Curry Corner)	215.35	5	10,160	B*	**	14,370	C*	**	1.7%	8	Rural—flat	8 to 9	45
West end—urban section	215.60	4	11,280	B*	**	16,780	C*	**	2.0%	8	Urban—curbed	NA	35
West end—Twin Falls couplet (2nd Ave.)	217.28	4	21,530	B*	**	32,000	C*	**	2.0%	3	Urban—curbed	NA	35
Five Points intersection	47.46	4	30,600	F*	**	42,600	F*	**	1.7%	5	Urban—curbed	NA	35
Blue Lakes Blvd./ Falls Ave. intersection	48.67	4	37,740	F*	**	52,540	F*	**	1.7%	4	Urban—curbed	NA	35
Pole Line Road/ Blue Lakes Blvd. intersection	49.46	4	28,560	F*	**	39,760	F*	**	1.7%	7.5	Urban—curbed	NA	35



Location	Mile Post	No. Lanes	2006 ADT	2006 LOS	2006 V/C Ratio	2026 ADT	2026 LOS	2026 V/C Ratio	Projected Growth (%)	% Trucks	Terrain	Shoulder Width (ft)	Speed Limit (mph)
Perrine Bridge—south side	50.14	4	25,760	B	**	41,000	C	**	2.4%	10	Urban—curbed	NA	35
US-93/I-84 interchange	53.09	4	17,370	B	**	24,770	B	**	1.8%	12	Rural—flat	6 to 8	60



◆ General Roadway Characteristics

The Thousand Springs Scenic Byway has three distinct legs:

▶ US-30 between Bliss and Twin Falls

This first leg is the western leg and is considered the primary leg and the portion from which the byway gets its name. This portion is primarily rural in nature and varies from a 24-foot-wide, two-lane rural roadway with 2-foot shoulders to a 60-foot-wide five-lane urban street with concrete curbs, gutters, and sidewalks. The rural portion runs from Bliss to Filer and provides spectacular views of the Snake River and the Snake River Canyon; it also provides access to unusual sites, such as the Thousand Springs State Park, the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument, and Balanced Rock. This portion of the byway also varies from mountainous terrain to rolling hills to relatively flat farmland. It comprises many curved sections with limited sight distance and restricted passing.

▶ SH-50 (runs east from Twin Falls and connects to I-84 near Eden)

This second leg crosses the Hansen Bridge over the Snake River and provides beautiful views of the Snake River Canyon near the bridge. A distance of only 4.8 miles, this leg is a relatively short section of the byway. It carries more truck and commercial traffic than the other legs of the byway because of its proximity to the I-84/SH-50 interchange for local agricultural processing plants. Using SH-50 allows trucks access to these plants without having to travel through the more urban portions of Twin Falls.

▶ US-93 (runs through Twin Falls and connects with I-84 to the north)

This third leg is the north-south portion of US-93 that extends from the US-30/US-93 intersection near downtown Twin Falls and runs north across the Perrine Bridge over the Snake River to the US-93/I-84 interchange, three miles north of Twin Falls. This leg is often used as the beginning point of

the byway for motorists traveling west. It is also heavily congested, having many commercial access points and high volumes of urban traffic within Twin Falls, with resulting high accident rates.

The total length of the byway is approximately 62.3 miles and it crosses through three counties: Gooding County, Twin Falls County, and Jerome County.

Table 4-1 lists current and projected traffic volumes at points on the byway along with ITD milepost designations and various roadway characteristics such as terrain, number of lanes, and shoulder widths.

◆ General Roadway Performance

Roadway performance and capacities are generally measured in terms of the roadway “level of service” (LOS). The LOS is a phrase that describes the roadway performance in terms of motorist delay, traffic-flow characteristics, and mobility. Each segment of a roadway can be rated from A to F to reflect traffic conditions at the given demand or service volume. An LOS rating of A means essentially uninterrupted flow where drivers can travel at their desired speed. An LOS rating of F indicates heavily congested flow with excessive delay. In rural areas, the LOS is typically measured by the percentage of time spent following other vehicles and average travel speed.

The following are optimal conditions for a two-lane rural highway:

- ▶ Capacity of under 3,200 passenger cars per hour (total of both directions)
- ▶ Lane width of 12 feet or greater
- ▶ Clear shoulders, 6 feet or greater
- ▶ No “no passing” zones
- ▶ Only cars in the traffic stream (no trucks)



- ▶ A 50/50 directional split of traffic
- ▶ No impediments to through traffic
- ▶ Level terrain

A higher LOS is generally expected for rural roadways than for urban roadways. A rating of B or higher is desirable on rural roadways, while low levels of service (C or even D) are acceptable on urban roadways.

With the exception of the east end of Buhl, the first leg of the byway between Bliss and Twin Falls (US-30) indicates current (2006) and projected (2026) LOS ratings of A and B. This is according to capacity calculations performed following the *Highway Capacity Manual* (HCM) formats for rural roadways. (The HCM is a national standard published by the federal Transportation Research Board.) The east end of Buhl has current and future LOS ratings of D due to the high amount of traffic on a two-lane roadway. As the byway approaches the Twin Falls city limits, the current LOS is B and the projected LOS drops to C.

The second leg of the byway, along SH-50, has an LOS of B for the portion between Twin Falls and the Hansen Bridge. This drops to a current LOS of C and a projected LOS of D near the Hansen Bridge, where the projected traffic levels are over 10,000 vehicles per day. If the traffic increases as predicted, this section of roadway may require additional lanes to handle the traffic flow efficiently.

The urban roadways of the byway within Twin Falls (the US-93 leg) generally operate at an LOS of C through the day with peak hours reaching LOS ratings of D and E. Some intersections operate at an LOS of F during peak hours, most notably at the intersections at Blue Lakes Boulevard/Pole Line Road, Blue Lakes Boulevard/Addison Avenue, and Washington Street/Addison Avenue. ITD has interconnected the signal system along Blue Lakes Boulevard and some improvement has been seen. The rapid increase in commercial growth combined

with poor access control through the corridor has diminished any significant gains in LOS.

The section of US-93 from I-84 to the Perrine Bridge is a four-lane divided highway with a “rural” section (gravel shoulders and no curb and gutter). This section currently exhibits an LOS rating of B while the projected LOS drops to C for the section south of the Perrine Bridge.

◆ Access to the Byway

The major access points to the byway are:

- ▶ **Primary west access**
Intersection of US-26/US-30 at Bliss (near I-84 Exit 137)
- ▶ **Primary north access**
I-84/US-93 interchange (I-84 Exit 174)
- ▶ **Primary east access**
I-84/SH-50 interchange (I-84 Exit 183)
- ▶ **Primary south access**
US-93/US 30 intersection

In terms of traffic volumes, the major access point is the I-84/US-93 interchange, which is 6 miles north of Twin Falls. The estimated traffic volume on US-93 just south of the interchange is over 17,000 vehicles per day (vpd). I-84 experiences a similar traffic volume west of the interchange, but the vpd number drops by several thousand east of the interchange, indicating a significant percentage of the traffic on I-84 may be commuter and business traffic between Twin Falls and smaller cities to the west. ITD recently completed a major reconstruction of the I-84/US-93 interchange that should provide an acceptable LOS for this access point for the foreseeable future.

The western access point, near I-84 Exit 137 and Bliss, should be the target access point for east-bound travelers. This access



point provides easy access for travelers to unique and scenic portions of the byway without having to negotiate congested city streets. The current signage on I-84 and US-26 could be improved to better direct travelers to the beginning of the byway. An Idaho Rural Tourism Development Plan (developed in 1995 by Idaho Commerce & Labor) indicated that approximately 35 percent of the traffic on I-84 is made up by “non-resident” vehicles. This translates to over 4,000 vpd. The estimated ADT on the western portion of the byway is 1,610 vpd. The difference in these two numbers shows a potential for more visitors to be diverted to the byway to enjoy the vistas and various points of interest along the way.

The eastern access, the I-84/SH-50 interchange, is easily accessed from I-84 and provides a scenic view of the Snake River and the Snake River Canyon. However, motorists very quickly find themselves in a busy city corridor, needing to negotiate intersections and turns in order to continue on to the remainder of the byway. Care needs to be taken that the signage for the west-bound visitor is very clear to make this part of the byway experience as stress-free as possible.

The major southern access, the intersection of US-93 and US-30, is more often the beginning access point for local motorists or travelers from Nevada. Again, care should be taken to provide adequate signage to the byway for travelers.

There are numerous local access points to the byway and some minor access routes from nearby cities. The following are the most notable:

- ▶ The road from Wendell to Hagerman
- ▶ The road from Wendell to Buhl
- ▶ The road approaching Filer from the north
- ▶ The road approaching Buhl from the south

These are all currently county-maintained roads. The Wendell-to-Buhl road has been under consideration by ITD for inclusion in the State highway system. This roadway crosses the Snake River near the Clear Lakes Grade and offers scenic views of the river and canyon. It would be very appropriate to include signage for the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway along this section of road if it becomes a state highway,

◆ Traffic Patterns

Projected Growth

Currently, the average daily traffic (ADT) volumes for the western, rural portions of the byway are relatively low, resulting in favorable operating levels of service (as outlined in **Table 4-1**). ITD used a growth rate of approximately 1.0 percent for the rural areas of the byway to project increases in traffic volume and growth rates ranging from 1.3 percent to 2.4 percent for areas around Twin Falls. As was noted in the *Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan* (August 1998), these growth rates do not account for potential traffic increases that may occur as a result of new byway promotions, marketing, improved signage, or other activities on the byway. Current traffic volumes for the rural portion of the byway between Bliss and Buhl are low enough that traffic could increase by up to 50 percent without impacting the roadway LOS. Intersections should be studied independently and some intersection improvements may be required as traffic volumes increase.

The urban portions of the byway carry much greater volumes of traffic and have higher projected growth rates resulting in lower LOS. Several segments are forecast to have LOS of D or lower. Improvements such as additional lanes or signalization may be required to provide acceptable LOS at several urban locations along the byway, such as the east end of Buhl and SH-50 near the Hansen Bridge.



Influence of Tourist/Seasonal Traffic

Many of the communities along the byway recognize tourism as an important component of the local economy. Touring motorists comprise a substantial portion of the traffic along the byway. However, there is a strong sentiment that tourism and the resulting development should not negatively impact the unique qualities of the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway. The residents of the byway desire careful planning of developments and consideration of future impacts of promotion on the byway.

The tourist season generally extends from March through November and roughly correlates with the agricultural season. This overlap in seasons creates potential conflicts between loaded farm trucks and slow-moving farm equipment using the roadway at the same time that tourists are looking for scenic pullouts and interpreting directional signage. Additional stops and signage, and improvements to existing sites and signage, should be made with consideration for the surrounding agricultural activity.

Impact of Commercial and Truck Traffic

According to traffic volumes and projections received from ITD, the percentage of truck traffic varies across the byway from a low of 3 percent to a high of 24 percent at the west end of SH-50. (See **Table 4-1.**) In most of the rural areas, this traffic has increased significantly since the August 1998 plan was written. Most of the truck traffic along US-30 between Bliss and Twin Falls is generated by agricultural activity from adjacent farm ground.

SH-50 has a higher percentage of truck traffic because it is an established east-west truck route that provides larger trucks easier access to US-93 from I-84. This truck route uses SH-74 to direct trucks away from the downtown portion of Twin Falls. A substantial amount of the truck traffic is generated by the

presence of several food-processing plants along the southern boundary of Twin Falls.

The August 1998 plan included the following recommendation concerning the mix of tourist traffic and farm-to-market trucking:

Marketing information on the byway should include reference to peak harvest periods and provide informational warnings to tourist traffic that farm equipment may be encountered along rural sections of the route. In addition, it is recommended that ITD provide additional standard signage along portions of the byway known to contain heavy volumes of farm traffic to further warn the non-area residents.

These recommendations still apply to planning and promotion efforts along the byway.

◆ Safety Considerations

Accident reports for 5 years spanning 2001 to 2005 were examined for the three legs of the byway. The total number of accidents for that 5-year period was 1,835, including 1163 injuries and 19 fatalities. The overall average per year was 367 accidents. This indicates an increase over the average number of 332 accidents per year that was reported in the August 1998 plan.

However, considering the average number of accidents over the entire byway is not an accurate means of analyzing byway safety. This is because a large proportion of accidents occurs on the US-93 portion (Blue Lakes Boulevard), a roadway that has one of the highest accident rates in the state.

An examination of the accidents on each segment on a per-year basis yields the following averages:

- ▶ 126.6 accidents per year for US-30
- ▶ 15.2 accidents per year for SH-50
- ▶ 225.2 accidents per year for US-93



Compare this to the amount reported in the August 1998 plan of 130, 11, and 191 accidents per year, respectively. This indicates a 2.6-percent decrease for US-30, but a 38-percent increase for SH-50 and an 18-percent increase for US-93.

If considered on an “accidents per year per mile” basis, a more stark contrast between the three segments becomes apparent. US-30 averages 2.5 accidents per mile per year. SH-50 averages 3.2 accidents per mile per year. But US-93 averages 33.9 accidents per mile per year—more than 10 times the number of accidents for each of the other two segments.

US-30 experienced 15 fatalities over the 5-year period. This equates to 0.3 fatalities per mile, or 0.06 fatalities per mile per year. SH-50 experienced 1 fatality, which equals 0.2 fatalities per mile, or 0.04 fatalities per mile per year. US-93 recorded 3 fatalities over the same period, equaling 0.45 fatalities per mile, or 0.09 fatalities per mile per year. The fatalities occurred over diverse locations and appear to be related to circumstances such as drowsiness, alcohol, speeding, failure to yield, and inattention rather than to geometric problems with the roadway.

Just under 60 percent of the accidents that occur along US-30 happen within Twin Falls and the 3-mile distance between Twin Falls and the US-30/SH 50 junction. In other words, nearly 60 percent of the accidents occur along 13 percent of the roadway. There are 13 intersections along the US-30 portion of the byway that had 7 or more accidents over the 5-year period. Of these 13 intersections, 11 are within Twin Falls and the 3-mile stretch east of Twin Falls.

Seven intersections along the US-93 portion of the byway experienced more than 20 accidents over the 5-year period. Falls Avenue topped the list at 78 accidents, followed by Filer Avenue with 52 accidents, the US-93/Blue Lakes Boulevard intersection with 51 accidents, Poleline Road with 44 accidents, Caswell Avenue with 43 accidents, Heyburn Avenue with

25 accidents, and Cheney Drive with 21 accidents over the 5-year period.

All three of the fatalities on the byway portion of US-93 occurred north of the city limits between the Perrine Bridge and I-84. The latest occurred at the US-93/I-84 interchange in January 2004. ITD recently completed upgrades to that interchange to improve functionality and capacity.

◆ Recommendations

Urban Areas

The *Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan* (August 1998) listed the following safety improvement recommendations for urban areas:

A study was recently completed . . . to investigate potential solutions to the high accident rate along Blue Lakes Boulevard. The study concluded that several steps could be taken in the short term, including: better paint striping, modified traffic signals, increased law enforcement (especially during weekend nights), and possibly restricted left turning movements at certain areas of the roadway.

These are still valid recommendations for improving the high-accident situation. Accidents along Blue Lakes Boulevard have increased 18 percent since 1998, but traffic at certain points has risen at a greater rate. The “Five Points” intersection (the intersection of US-93, Addison Avenue, and Blue Lakes Boulevard) experienced a 60 percent increase in traffic, while the Falls Avenue intersection experienced a 156 percent increase. Other intersections between Falls Avenue and the Perrine Bridge showed approximately a 12 percent increase in traffic between 1997 and 2006.

The high accident situation along the urban portion of the byway is not improving. Diligence needs to be exercised in continuing to work with Twin Falls and ITD to resolve this issue.



Rural Areas

90-degree Corners West of Buhl

The August 1998 plan indicated that some residents expressed concern about these corners. Some wanted them rebuilt while others wanted improved signage. In 1998, ITD indicated it had no plans to rebuild these corners and currently does not have plans to do so. This plan recommends investigating placing additional curve-ahead signage preceding the corners—such as the signage designated as MUTCD W13-5 in the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD). There have been 8 accidents at these three corners in the past 5 years; all but one were single-vehicle accidents. Most cited “speed too fast for conditions” as the contributing circumstance.

Malad Bridge

The August 1998 plan recommended lowering the speed limit, adding signage, and investigating the addition of a left-turn bay at the Malad River Bridge. In 2006, the speed limit had not been lowered and ITD currently has no plans to add a left turn bay at this location. There have been no reported accidents in the past 5 years at this location.

Consider reducing the speed limit from the north boundary of Hagerman to Malad Bridge. This would also increase safety at the entrance to the Billingsley Creek Unit of the Thousand Springs State Park.

US-30 East of Twin Falls

The August 1998 plan recommended a center turn lane from the US-30/SH50 intersection to the Eastland Road intersection in Twin Falls, a distance of 2 miles. This has not been accomplished. It remains a recommendation because of the large number of accidents along this portion of roadway (this segment experienced 6 of the 18 fatalities that occurred over the entire byway from 2001 through 2005). Safety upgrades at

the US-30/SH-50 intersection could be considered, such as installing flashing yellow lights, signalization, reducing the speed limit on US-30 near the intersection, and placing additional intersection warning signs for the west-bound traffic.

ITD has plans to add a traffic signal at 3200 E and US 30 in 2007 (Key # H4050). This should help improve safety at this intersection and create gaps in traffic flow at nearby intersections.

Additional 2007 Recommendations

The *Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan* (January 2007) offers the following recommendations in addition to the recommendations from the August 1998 plan described above:

- ▶ Investigate the need for an additional no-passing zone near Milepost 190 on US-30, north of Hagerman. This section of road has multiple horizontal curves with limited sight distance. According to Table 3B-1 in the MUTCD (which defines minimum passing sight distances), a 35-mph speed requires 550-feet for minimum passing sight distance, a 45-mph speed requires at least 700 feet, and a 60-mph speed requires 1,000-feet.
- ▶ Construct acceleration and deceleration lanes at historic sites and interpretive sign turnouts along the byway. Some of these locations do not have these lanes. As traffic increases along the byway, it will become more difficult to enter and exit the two-lane highway without delays or without interrupting the existing flow of traffic.
- ▶ It was noted that the road surface between Bliss and the Malad River Bridge is rough and exhibiting severe cracking. A review of the ITD Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) showed that there is a road surface rehabilitation project planned for this segment of roadway, to be completed in 2008 (Key # 9768). Completion of this



project would greatly improve the comfort and experience of byway travelers.

- ▶ Advocates of the byway may want to investigate whether a walkway can be provided along Gridley Bridge in conjunction with any future rehabilitation of the bridge.

Additional projects planned by ITD will impact and benefit the byway:

- ▶ **Key # 08836**
Resurfacing of the roadway in Buhl from Sawtooth Boulevard to Warren Avenue, scheduled for FY 2008.
- ▶ **Key # 09212**
Minor repair of Perrine Bridge, scheduled for FY 2008.
- ▶ **Key # 09763**
Upgrades and a bicycle/pedestrian trail at the scenic overlook at the Snake River Scenic Canyon Overlook by the Perrine Bridge, scheduled for FY 2010.
- ▶ **Key # 10563**
Reconstruction of the Hagerman Rest Area, scheduled for FY 2010. \$1,565,000 has been allocated for this reconstruction (which does not include design and construction engineering).



5

MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL PLAN

*"Without new experiences, something inside of us sleeps. The sleeper must awaken."
Frank Herbert*

◆ Overview

One of the primary goals of a corridor management plan is to enhance the economic vitality of local communities and the region. Numerous opportunities exist for the byway communities to market and promote the byway. Tourism is a year-round economic strategy that, when organized and continuous, can improve the economic vitality of the byway region.

A marketing and promotional plan is a very important part of byway implementation strategies. Strategic activities should focus on bringing the byway's historical, scenic, and geological assets to those who live in the area, as well as to visitors and tourists from outside the region. Incremental and affordable marketing and promotional tools are available. Today, Idaho Commerce & Labor is aggressively promoting statewide tourism and 27 state byways at <http://www.itd.idaho.gov/byways>.

◆ Tourism

Tourism represents one of the most important components in state and local economies. The Idaho tourism, travel, and recreation industry has enjoyed steady growth over the past decade and continues to grow at a faster rate than that of Idaho's overall economy. In fact, climbing fuel prices have failed to dampen the urge to explore hidden backroads away from urban noise and congestion.

In 2004, a comprehensive analysis of Idaho's tourism industry showed the impact of tourism at the state and county level ("The Economic Impact of Travel & Tourism in Idaho, A Comprehensive Analysis," *Global Insight*, 2004).

- ▶ Spending by travelers in Idaho totaled \$2.97 billion.
- ▶ Direct employment generated by tourism comprises 7 percent of all jobs in Idaho.
- ▶ Travel and tourism accounted for 5 percent of the Idaho Gross State Product.
- ▶ Domestic travel represented 89 percent of total visitor spending in Idaho with international travel comprising 11 percent.
- ▶ Leisure travel to Idaho exceeded business travel and represented 80 percent of that total spent on both activities.

In addition, the report showed the comparative value of visitor spending at the county level (see Table 5-1).

In October 2005, Carl Wilgus of Idaho Commerce & Labor (Tourism Division) reported that, despite record-high gas prices, Idaho's summer tourism season posted strong gains. Overall lodging revenues increased by 10.5 percent from the summer of



2004. Total revenues for the summer of 2005 were just under \$124 million, up from \$112.2 million in 2004.

◆ Primary Market

Often-overlooked local and statewide residents are an economic force. Jerome, Gooding, and Twin Falls counties have a combined population of approximately 100,000 residents. Regionally, visitors from Boise, Ketchum, and Pocatello can easily travel the byway on a weekend day, spending money for food and fuel at a minimum. Travelers passing by on I-84 from Utah to Boise or Portland make up another visitor category. A coordinated and focused marketing effort should understand the various byway clients and aim at attracting new local, national, and, international visitors.

“Experiential” tourists are a target market worth pursuing—travelers who seek experiences that are authentic and hands-on. Rural tourism appeals to travelers seeking experiences that involve such things as nature, culture, and heritage. However, through strategic tourism development, rural areas can increase the visitor’s length of stay and dollars spent.

◆ Marketing Strategy

The Thousand Springs Scenic Byway is fortunate to already have many active players interested in its success. Developing and implementing a byway marketing strategy is essential to realizing tourism and the economic development benefits of the byway. Strategic alliances with local chambers of commerce, the Southern Idaho Tourism, Idaho Commerce & Labor, and other agencies will allow marketing funds to be used with a singular, coordinated appearance. There are many types of marketing materials—from byway signage to byway celebrations and events. Several affordable promotional materials are discussed below, including a Thousand Springs Scenic Byway guide, rack card, Internet web site, and audiotape/compact disc (CD).

Table 5-1. US Dollars Spent by Visitors (in millions)

County	Transportation	Food	Lodging	Entertainment	Shopping	Total	Percentage of Total County Sales
Twin Falls	\$37.97	\$31.60	\$20.44	\$16.38	\$41.88	\$148.27	3%
Jerome	\$1.05	\$4.01	\$4.54	\$0.83	\$4.33	\$14.75	1%
Gooding	\$0.54	3.54	\$1.23	\$2.50	\$3.36	\$11.17	1%

Source: “The Economic Impact of Travel & Tourism in Idaho, A Comprehensive Analysis,” *Global Insight*, 2004



Cooperative Byway Development Strategies

Close coordination with other local, regional, and state groups is critical for developing a workable and effective byway marketing program. In addition, international tourism markets are important and efforts should be made to seek alliances with tourism promotions outside the U.S.

The Thousand Springs Scenic Byway area has a number of local, regional, and state tourism agencies that are already actively involved in marketing.

▶ **Southern Idaho Tourism**

This private, non-profit organization has public and private representation from seven counties across the Snake River Plain. Mission statement: "Develop and promote regional tourism and recreation—striking the balance between economic benefit and stewardship of our natural resources." (<http://www.visitsouthidaho.com>).

▶ **Local community and business organizations**

- Bliss
- Buhl
- Filer
- Hagerman
- Jerome
- Kimberly
- Twin Falls

▶ **Idaho Commerce & Labor, Tourism Division**

The Tourism Division is dedicated to the growth of the tourism industry in Idaho and provides information for consumers and assistance to tourism partner businesses across the state. The agency markets the state's travel opportunities throughout the West and the world with a variety of programs and partnerships. Visit <http://www.visitid.org/> for an extensive list of tourist information.

Other marketing efforts with individual resources are also available. These resources include but are not limited to the following:

- ▶ **Hagerman National Fish Hatchery**
(<http://www.fws.gov/hagerman/>)
- ▶ **Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation**
(<http://www.idahoparks.org/parks/>)
- ▶ **Idaho Power Company**
(<http://www.idahopower.com>)
- ▶ **Idaho Department of Fish and Game**
(<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/>)
- ▶ **Twin Falls County Parks & Waterways**
(<http://www.twinfallscounty.org/dir/parks.htm>)
- ▶ **Twin Falls County Historical Society, Inc.**
(<http://www.museumsusa.org/museums/info/1158561>)
- ▶ **Region IV Development Association, Inc.**
(<http://www.rivda.org/>)
- ▶ **Idaho State Historical Society**
(<http://www.idahohistory.net/>)
- ▶ **National Park Service**
(<http://www.nps.gov>)
- ▶ **Idaho Bureau of Land Management**
(<http://www.id.blm.gov>)



◆ Interpretive Materials

Postcards, Brochures, Posters, Placemats, and Coloring Books

Attracting visitors to the byway can best be accomplished if various methods of interpretation are available. Postcards, brochures, posters, placemats, and coloring books can be tailored to meet the needs of different audiences and located at information centers, chambers of commerce (where they exist), and restaurants.

Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Guide

A free interpretive brochure with a map is an excellent method for widely distributing information to all interested agencies and organizations. The guide will draw visitors to the region and encourage extended stays. The guide could feature the 11 sites, as well as provide brief information about the sites, day-trips, and events.

Rack Card

A 4x9-inch color rack card with stunning byway photos is a good technique for introducing or reminding potential users. Typically four colors on one side and black and white on the other, such a card uses an eye-catching headline near the top. The back side of the card provides a small locator map, information, and contact information to request a packet of materials.

◆ Audio Tour Development

For many visitors, an audio tour could increase the value of the byway experience. Visitors could obtain or borrow and return a compact disc (CD) from byway communities or key sites.

◆ Internet Web Sites

The State of Idaho maintains an excellent web site about all the byways (<http://www.itd.idaho.gov/byways/index.htm>).

If desired, a local Thousand Springs Scenic Byway web site could link to the state site and promote the byway. The site could include a virtual tour of the byway. It could also include a map of the corridor, photos, a description of the 11 sites, and an e-mail response form for users to request more information.

Key byway sites could disseminate information to visitors through computer linkages to various resources in southwest Idaho. Potential portal sites could include the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Idaho Power Company, and the various Chambers of Commerce.

Computers at these sites, connected to an Internet browser, could access information about the entire byway, with links to sites with more detailed information. An online service at one of the portal sites could provide information about such things as history, geology, nature, events, other facilities, and accommodations.



◆ Marketing and Promotion Goals and Actions

Goal 1: Increase the number of visitors exploring the byway through improved marketing and promotion.

Actions:

- ▶ Host a web site to assist tourists and provide information about the byway.
- ▶ Display current information about the byway on the Internet.
- ▶ Prepare a byway brochure and distribute it at key locations.
- ▶ Write press releases for local newspapers and radio stations about the byway and highlight the fascinating byway side trips.
- ▶ Procure a traveling trade show exhibit booth.
- ▶ Encourage byway communities to post information (for example, about their visitor lodging and services) to the "Local Communities" page of "Visit Idaho" web site at <http://www.visitid.org/>.
- ▶ Support and facilitate signage at the west end of Bliss for easy access from I-84.
- ▶ Work with all the byway communities to accommodate the needs of travelers with such things as signage and parking.
- ▶ Encourage the local cities to beautify city entrances to give visitors a sense of place.

Goal 2: Increase local awareness of the byway.

Actions:

- ▶ Print placemats for local restaurants to promote byway awareness.
- ▶ Generate tours for newspaper and magazine journalists and encourage them to write about the byway in their publications.
- ▶ Inform local schools and teachers about the byway.
- ▶ Encourage development of evening activities.

Goal 3: Increase visitor length-of-stay in the byway corridor.

Actions:

- ▶ Produce an audiotape tour that will heighten visitor interest in the byway's historical, cultural, natural, and scenic resources.
- ▶ Develop an interpretive book that will encourage the visitor to spend more time on the byway.
- ▶ Promote the development of new lodging, recreational activities, and events that will extend visitor stays.

Goal 4: Educate visitors about their role in protecting the environment and managing the byway's resources.

Actions:

- ▶ Produce a coloring book for children.
- ▶ Promote the byway at local schools and civic groups.



- ▶ Install interpretation at sites along the byway to better educate the visitor about protecting the resources.

Goal 5: Expand winter and off-season use of the byway.

Actions:

- ▶ Improve byway site trail systems and encourage year-round use.
- ▶ Target education and events tied to the Herrett Center for Arts and Science, museums, national monuments, state parks, visitor centers, colleges, and schools.



6

BYWAY IMPLEMENTATION

*"The journey, not the arrival matters."
T.S. Eliot*

◆ Overview

Implementation of the byway vision requires time, diversity of resources, creativity, and continual local effort. The Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Advisory Committee has produced the corridor management plan as a roadmap for the byway. The next step, and the most challenging, is to implement the plan. This chapter provides a matrix and discussion of organizational options and funding sources for continuing the byway work.

◆ Byway Organization

Partnerships are the backbone of effective organizations. Most byway organizations find they need help to accomplish their goals. Broad support within the local region of the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway is a key to successful byway projects. By assuring that the implementation team is composed of varied interests and stakeholders, the likelihood of the plan's implementation is assured.

The Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Advisory Committee has been dedicated, productive, and committed to the byway's development. It is recommended that a new, sustaining byway partnership build from existing membership and reach-out for new partners that share the vision for the byway. It is recommended that, at a minimum, the management partnership or team meet quarterly.

Memorandum of Understanding

The byway partnership that will implement the plan should be formalized in a memorandum of understanding (MOU). The MOU is an agreement between all partners along the byway, including local, state, federal, and special interest groups. Currently, the byway does not have staff or funded infrastructure. Most projects will require volunteers and community support. Potential partners include:

- ▶ Cities of Bliss, Hagerman, Buhl, Filer, Twin Falls, Kimberly, and Hansen
- ▶ Chambers of commerce
- ▶ Counties of Twin Falls, Jerome, and Gooding
- ▶ Downtown associations
- ▶ Economic development agencies
- ▶ Hagerman National Fish Hatchery
- ▶ Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- ▶ Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
- ▶ Idaho Labor & Commerce
- ▶ Idaho Power Company
- ▶ National Park Service
- ▶ Region IV Development Association, Inc.
- ▶ Southern Idaho Tourism
- ▶ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- ▶ U.S. Bureau of Land Management



◆ Byway Investment Strategies

This corridor management plan outlines desired byway projects. A key component is marketing and promotional strategies. Pooled resources and cooperation will enable more effective programs than can be obtained by any single organization or community. Byway promoters should seek to “piggy-back” on existing marketing efforts, coordinating with state and regional partners in promotional efforts wherever possible. Other opportunities include public-private partnerships. Also proposed are strategies to utilize community resources that protect byway resources for future generations and enhance its value to each community.

◆ Byway Services

An inventory of South Central Idaho motel and hotel guestrooms, bed-and-breakfast facilities, RV parks, and public campgrounds is maintained by the State of Idaho on the web site <http://www.visitid.org/>.

◆ Downtown Revitalization

A key opportunity to attracting guests and expanding new economic development in the cities is downtown revitalization. Hagerman, Buhl, and Twin Falls have been actively engaged in projects to update their historic the downtowns. Funds are available from the Community Development Block Grant program, sponsored by Idaho Commerce & Labor.

It is recommended that the byway partnership investigate the creation of a regional Main Street Program (modeled after the National Main Street Center’s four-point approach) to assist and advise byway towns on downtown revitalization techniques and funding. (Visit the National Mainstreet Program web site at <http://www.mainstreet.org>.)

An initial component of this program is hiring a Main Street manager to act as a circuit-rider coordinator, who would help renovate older buildings, promote special events, recruit new business and seek funding. Another area where Main Street can help is in assisting communities to improve their entryways. With the assistance from Main Street, community organizations and citizen volunteers can work together to plant trees, mow grass, maintain appropriate signage, and improve their entries. Funding can be sought to help downtown revitalization, historic preservation, entryway improvements, and other relevant community development programs.

◆ Maintenance Strategy

A key component of the byway plan is to encourage local adoption of the 11 byway sites. An Adopt-a-Byway-Site program is recommended to help maintain the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway. Byway site maintenance could include trash collection, general site upkeep, vandalism repair, snow removal, graveling, and periodic grading of parking areas.

Such a program could be patterned after the successful Adopt-a-Highway program that helps pick up litter. It would expand local awareness of the byway and its historic and natural assets. The program would create a stronger sense of local ownership for these sites and reduce maintenance costs. Similar programs elsewhere have shown that local volunteerism, particularly with youth, tends to reduce vandalism.



◆ Implementation Costs

Detailed key site improvements and costs are found in Chapter 3. Table 6-1 shows the estimated cost for each site and total estimated cost. Please note that many site development costs are based on volunteer labor and land donations.

◆ Funding Sources

The Thousand Springs Historic Byway partnership will need to utilize a variety of funding sources to implement the corridor management plan. The agencies and organizations represented on the planning committee will seek funding from a wide variety of sources, including federal, state, and local government agencies, grants, foundations, corporations, interest groups, service organizations, and the general public.

National Scenic Byways Program

The National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP) was established under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991. Under the program, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based on their archaeological, scenic, cultural, historic, natural, and recreational scenic qualities. There are 126 such designated byways in 39 states. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) promotes the collection as the America's Byways®.

This NSBP is founded upon the strength of the leaders for individual byways. It is a voluntary, grassroots program that recognizes and supports outstanding roads. It provides resources to help manage the intrinsic qualities in the byway corridors so that they may be treasured and shared. An underlying principle for the program has been articulated best by the byway leader who said, "the program is about recognition, not regulation."

Table 6-1. Estimated Implementation Costs

Site	Description	Cost
1	Bliss Gateway Park	\$121,000
2	Snake River Canyon Overlook	\$56,000
3	Malad River Overlook	—
4	Billingsley Creek Unit of the Thousand Springs State Park	\$2,554,000
5	City of Hagerman	\$2,005,000
6	Hagerman Fish and Wildlife Viewing Area	\$12,500
7	Thousand Springs State Park *	\$145,000
8	City of Buhl	\$13,500
9	Twin Falls County Historical Museum and Visitor Center	\$32,500
10	City of Twin Falls and Buzz Langdon Visitor Center	—
11	Hansen Bridge Overlook	\$56,000
	Subtotal	\$4,995,500
	Marketing	\$10,000
	Total	\$5,005,500

* The figure for Site 7 does not include the cost for purchasing a piece of Snake River frontage in accordance with the development plan.



America's Byways® serves as the umbrella for recognizing and promoting National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads. The FHWA promotes the collection with the America's Byways map, on its traveler web site at www.byways.org, and through public and private cooperative projects. Promotion of the America's Byways® brand and logo increases visitor recognition of the program and encourages travelers to include byways in their trip plans.

Funding for Byways

The National Scenic Byways Discretionary Grants program provides funding for byway-related projects each year, as part of the Federal Highway Administration's Discretionary Grants Program. Projects to support and enhance National Scenic Byways, All-American Roads and state-designated byways are eligible. Applications are prepared online but submitted through the state's byway program agency.

With support from their State Scenic Byways Coordinator, local citizens nominate roads for possible designation by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation as a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road. Careful thought and a significant amount of effort go into each nomination. Stakeholders in the effort need to know what benefits could result from the designation and what their responsibilities are when their byways become part of the collection of America's Byways®.

Benefits of designation have been characterized as the four P's: promotion, preservation, partnerships and pride. Along with those benefits are responsibilities taken on by byway groups and by the program that combine to build a strong byway community.

For additional information, contact Garry Young, Scenic Byways Coordinator/Program Manager, at (208) 334-8214.

Surface Transportation Program (STP)

This program, administered by the Idaho Transportation Department, provides funding for the reconstruction or rehabilitation of roadways on the state highway system. This includes interstate, U.S., and state highway routes. The funds originate from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which covers 92.66% of the costs of the project. These projects are identified and prioritized by ITD district engineers. Eligible projects are identified, prioritized, and requested by local agencies through a formal project application process (January-March). Project proposals are reviewed and ranked by Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC) and a prioritized list of projects (based on available funding) is then presented to the Idaho Transportation Board, for inclusion in the draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) in June.

STP Local Rural

The STP program is further divided into urban and rural elements. STP rural funds are allocated to local county road departments and highway districts. The ITD Board has designated a total of 6.3% of the total annual SAFETEA-LU formula funding for local rural projects. Projects are selected through competitive application to the Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC).

STP Safety

Funds for projects to reduce accidents at identified hazardous locations and for bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements are available through this program. Final selection of projects is by the Idaho Transportation Board. Evaluation of project sites is based upon an ITD safety review and a safety benefit to project cost ratio. Ten percent of the project costs must be paid by the sponsor.



STP Enhancement

Funds are available to state, local, federal agencies, universities and Indian Tribes, for the following transportation enhancement activities:

- ▶ Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles.
- ▶ Provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicycles.
- ▶ Acquisition of scenic easement and scenic or historic sites.
- ▶ Scenic or historic highway programs, including the provision of tourist or welcome centers.
- ▶ Landscaping and other scenic beautification.
- ▶ Historic preservation.
- ▶ Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities.
- ▶ Preservation of abandoned railway corridors
- ▶ Control and removal of outdoor advertising
- ▶ Archaeological planning
- ▶ Mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff
- ▶ Mitigation of wildlife mortality caused by vehicles
- ▶ Establishment of Transportation Museums.

Projects are solicited through an annual statewide application process (Nov-Feb). The Enhancement Advisory Committee (EAC), an advisory committee established by the Idaho Transportation Board, then prioritizes project applications within available funding levels. The Idaho Transportation Board has set a \$500,000 maximum cap on Federal-aid funds. The local or state match requirement is from 2 to 10 percent. Final project selection is by the Idaho Transportation Board.

Information and current year applications are available at the following web site: www.state.id.us/itd/planning under "What's new". For additional information on the Enhancement Program call (208) 334-8209.

Scenic Byway Program

Funding is available on a nationally competitive basis for routes that have been designated as a state scenic, historic or back country byway. Projects can include the development of a corridor management plan for a specific byway or for road or enhancement work on the corridor once a management plan has been completed. Scenic byway funds are announced and awarded at the Federal level and administered once awarded by ITD. The local or state match requirement is 20 percent.

All applications for project funding must be submitted through the state's transportation department and reviewed by its appropriate ITD District office. The Scenic Byway Advisory Committee appointed by the Board then prioritizes project applications. The Board makes a final determination as to which projects are submitted to FHWA for funding consideration. Project awards are announced by FHWA some time after the beginning of the federal fiscal year. Application information is available on the National web site at <http://www.byways.org>.

For additional information about the Scenic Byway Program contact Garry Young, Scenic Byways Coordinator/Program Manager, at (208) 334-8214.

State Funded Program (ST)

This program is for roadways on the state highway system. It has no federal participation. Generally, the projects in this program are smaller than federally funded projects, such as pavement resurfacing, or smaller bridge or safety projects. These projects need to be identified and prioritized by the ITD district engineers based upon roadway condition, public involvement,



funding availability, and project costs. The Idaho Transportation Board makes the final decision and selection of these projects.

The Idaho Transportation Department is the key player in the disbursement of funds for roadway projects. The committee needs to be an advocate for the recommended improvements for the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway. A primary goal should be to reinforce the value of the byway to southwest Idaho's economy. When a project is selected for funding, it is actively supported by a committed group of citizens and interest groups. There must be a need for the project, which must be adequately presented to ITD and supported with facts and figures. This process can be very political and time-consuming. The management team must maintain continuous and meaningful contact with elected officials, the ITD district staff, the planner, and district engineer for ITD, District 4, and the Idaho Transportation Board.

Idaho Commerce & Labor

Money is available through the Travel Grant Program, funded by a 2 percent lodging tax paid by travelers and collected by Idaho hotel, motel, and private campground owners. Its mission is to stimulate and expand the state's travel industry through local efforts and matching funds. Grant applications from non profit chambers of commerce, convention and visitors bureaus, and regional travel organizations are due the first Monday in June. Technical and marketing assistance is available to tourism suppliers interested in pursuing the international travel market.

◆ Priority of Projects

The Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Advisory Committee has prioritized byway site improvements into high, medium, and low, as shown in Table 6-2a, Table 6-2b, and Table 6-2c.

See the site descriptions in Chapter 3 for details about projects.

Table 6-2a. High-Priority Projects

Site	Improvement
Site 1—Bliss Gateway Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Bliss Gateway Park ▶ Interpretive signage
Site 2—Snake River Canyon Outlook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enhancements to existing parking/pullout area
Site 3—Malad River Overlook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Malad River overlook upgrades
Site 4—Billingsley Creek Unit of the Thousand Springs State Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Implementation of the Thousand Springs State Park Plan for the Billingsley Creek Unit ▶ Protection of natural resources and attractions
Site 5—City of Hagerman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Volunteer Park interpretive signage ▶ General Management Plan for the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument
Site 6—Hagerman Fish and Wildlife Viewing Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interpretive signage ▶ Pathway and photography blind
Site 7—Thousand Springs State Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cross-river transportation to Ritter Island ▶ Interpretive signage
Site 8—City of Buhl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interpretive signage
Site 9—Twin Falls County Historical Museum and Visitor Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Museum signage ▶ Parking improvement and expansion
Site 11—Hansen Bridge Overlook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hansen Bridge Overlook improvements



Table 6.2b. Medium-Priority Projects

Site	Improvement
Site 1—Bliss Gateway Park	▶ Self-guided walking and auto tour brochure
Site 2—Snake River Canyon Outlook	▶ Interpretive signage and mapboard relocation
Site 3—Malad River Overlook	▶ Trail system expansion ▶ Malad River power plant renovation
Site 4—Billingsley Creek Unit of the Thousand Springs State Park	▶ Fisher interpretive signage and workshops
Site 5—City of Hagerman	▶ Shared visitor center
Site 6—Hagerman Fish and Wildlife Viewing Area	▶ Side trip brochure and signage
Site 7—Thousand Springs State Park	▶ Development plan ▶ Snake River frontage ▶ Public interpretive site with ferry dock ▶ Landscape screening or fencing
Site 9—Twin Falls County Historical Museum and Visitor Center	▶ Expanded museum and improvement of facilities
Site 11—Hansen Bridge Overlook	▶ Improvements and increased staffing at Rock Creek Station

Table 6.2c. Low-Priority Projects

Site	Improvement
Site 1—Bliss Gateway Park	▶ Downtown Bliss revitalization
Site 5—City of Hagerman	▶ City entrance beautification
Site 7—Thousand Springs State Park	▶ Hillside viewing area
Site 8—City of Buhl	▶ Self-guided tours ▶ Entry enhancement
Site 11—Hansen Bridge Overlook	▶ Hansen Park ▶ Walking tours



7

BYWAY EVALUATION

◆ Overview

Completion of the management plan is an important milestone, but the work is not over. The management plan is a document to help the communities along the byway develop and maintain this valuable economic resource. The plan defines the byway, prioritizes improvements, outlines a marketing and promotional strategy, and identifies responsibility for implementing the plan.

The byway partnership, comprised of local community leaders, needs to periodically evaluate the plan and its implementation. As site improvements are made to the byway, the byway partnership should re-evaluate and prioritize the remaining projects for each interpretive site.

◆ Interpretive Site Assessments

All of the byway sites should be reviewed for meeting byway goals and quality of the visitor experience. Some of the items to be monitored include:

- ▶ Security
- ▶ Parking
- ▶ Landscaping
- ▶ Maintenance

In addition, the byway partnership should evaluate the byway's promotional activities and the economic benefits to the byway communities. It is important that the byway partnership actively pursue private and public funding sources in order to accomplish the recommended projects.

In future years, the byway partnership should also re-address the issue of becoming a National Scenic Byway. The advantages and disadvantages of this designation should be discussed. If national status is favorable to the communities along the byway, an application to the Federal Highway Administration on behalf of the byway could be initiated.

◆ Impact Assessment

The byway partnership should keep abreast of the traffic patterns and their effect on the byway. The ITD publishes traffic data for US-30 and SH-50. The average daily traffic volumes and accident records for the segments will be valuable to assess the impact of anticipated improvements suggested by this byway plan.

A possible visitor survey or questionnaire at locations on the byway could also provide information to the byway partnership about the reception of the byway strategies.



◆ Byway Expansion

Periodically, the byway partnership should review options for expanding the number of sites or the route of the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway. Popular side trips may become incorporated into the byway or formally added as a “loop” trip. New appropriate venues can add interest and new excitement to the byway. Several future sites include:

- ▶ Salmon Creek Gorge
- ▶ Owsley Bridge and Owsley Idaho Power Recreation Site

Salmon Creek Gorge

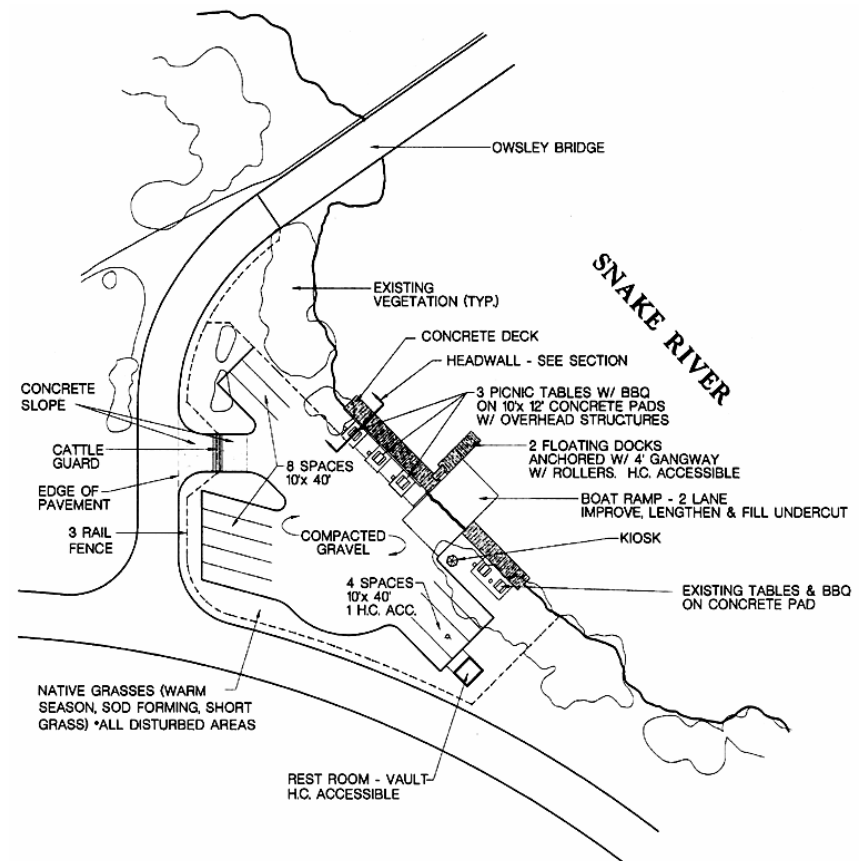
One of the Buhl's untapped natural resources is the Salmon Creek Gorge. The gorge features a fantastic wonderland through almost its entire length. Marvels of the canyon of this stream include colorful pillars and colonnades, Phantom Walls and nearby Sinking Canyon Ranch.

Owsley Bridge and Owsley Idaho Power Company Recreation Site

The Owsley Bridge Boat Launch Facility is a recreation site located on the south side of the Snake River upstream of Owsley Bridge (see Figure 7-1). It is owned and operated by the Idaho Power Company. Amenities include a boat ramp, picnic table, docks, and parking area. Facility enhancements will include a vault toilet, concrete deck, improved boat ramp and dock facilities, redesigning of the traffic pattern to allow one entrance/exit for traffic safety, blading and graveling of the parking area with designated spaces, and enlarging of the vehicle/trailer parking area. The site will be handicapped-accessible and will provide educational information to visitors. Interpretive subjects include water flows, boating safety, resident fish populations, water quality, wildlife, botany, geology, local history, and cultural resources.

The Idaho Power Company has developed a recreation management plan for the Upper Salmon Falls Hydroelectric Project. The plan considers land-based and water-based recreational opportunities. The Upper Salmon Falls Power Plant picnic area is a small day-use area overlooking the headwaters of the Lower Salmon Falls Reservoir. It provides picnic tables, shade trees, turf and seasonal portable toilet (May to October).

Figure 7-1. Owsley Idaho Power Company Recreation Site





Owsley Bridge features a continuous truss and innovative bridge design. It is one of Idaho's most unique historic bridges. Built in 1920-21 by M.E. Idle and the U.S. Bridge Company of Boise, the structure was heralded as "the first modern steel bridge over the Snake River west of American Falls." Owing to the depth of water, a special design was developed by Idaho state bridge engineer Charles A. Kyle, utilizing a steel, continuous through truss of cantilever type. The 422-foot Warren truss bridge consists of a 264-foot center span and two 82-foot 6-inch spans. The roadway is 17 feet wide. A lattice railing extends along both sides of the bridge, terminating in decorative cast-metal end posts at the north approach. The structure is supported on concrete piers and wingwall abutments.

Before the bridge existed, the Owsley Ferry operated above Salmon Falls and Dolman Island. Salmon Falls was once renowned for abundant fish that spawned before the falls. Oregon Trail emigrants crossed the Snake River and began utilizing the North Alternate in 1852 after retired mountain men installed a ferry above Salmon Falls.

Later, the ferry later became part of the Overland Stage route. The bridge formed a connection on the Idaho Pacific State Highway between Gooding and Twin Falls counties.

◆ Annual Byway Status

A short annual report written by the byway partnership should be published annually and submitted to the byway cities and counties, as well as to interested and participating agencies. If feasible, the annual report should be provided to the newspaper and/or media for public review. This report should primarily address the progress of the recommended implementation strategies and any challenges facing the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway.



Historic Owsley Bridge

A yearly meeting is suggested for the byway partnership. This would be a time to refocus community attention to the byway and its value to the South Central Idaho region. The work session, held by the byway partnership, could be scheduled before the release of the annual report, allowing time to organize the byway partnership and direct assignments to individual members. An annual meeting, open to the public, could then be presented as a "state of the byway" address to promote the progress and the value of the byway.



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